

IN THE TOILS *of* SLAVERY

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BY

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By IVY C. BLACKBURN

1906

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY

PREFACE.

That the following work is very defective from a literary view point the writer is well aware, but our only aim is to impress the reader with a few of the crimes and some of the suffering caused by the liquor trade, which we consider the most heinous of crimes ever tolerated by an enlightened, God-fearing people.

The incidents herein described have either come under our personal observation or been gleaned from sources supposed to be reliable.

With this brief explanation of our book, we commend it to your careful consideration.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY

CHAPTER I

A few years ago, just as a summer's sun was sinking behind the stately Rockies, two men were standing in front of a saloon in a little town in one of our middle western states while a girl of perhaps twelve years of age was hurrying away as fast as she could walk. One of the men, Paul Rivers by name, was a noble specimen of manhood. Rather above the medium height with broad shoulders and symmetrical figure, his dark hair and beard, slightly streaked with gray, being the only indication of age. Goodness and benevolence were stamped all over his face, while the keen brown eyes were usually kind and sympathetic. Just now, however, they are flashing anger and stern rebuke as their owner addresses the man by his side, Ezekiel McGregor, one of the village saloon keepers, for Rosedale, though only a small place, can boast two saloons.

"I must request you, Mr. McGregor, not to use profanity when speaking to children. It frightens this one exceedingly."

"Let 'em stay 'way then. Who wants 'em whinin' 'round?" replied McGregor, sullenly, but his shifting, restless eyes refused to meet Mr. Rivers' searching gaze and he turned and entered his saloon muttering:

"What's he comin' nosin' 'round here for, I'd like to know? They say the city chaps is afraid of him. Makes 'em shet up Sundays an' the like. Queer doin's for a preacher, I must say, an' he needn't think to come it over me. I've paid good money for license an' I'm goin' to sell

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

liquor as I please, and' I'll have no meddlin' preachers 'round neither, an' if the kids don't want a cussin' they needn't come blubberin' 'round."

McGregor's soliloquy was plentifully adorned with forms of emphasis that we regret to say are not all together peculiar to gentlemen of his calling, but as the reader will doubtless find enough else in the perusal of these pages to shock his various senses we refrain from writing them here.

But what a contrast to his visitor is McGregor; of medium height, but with a form bloated from the use of stimulants, bushy eyebrows that almost meet over greenish gray eyes, and a face that seems already to have received the mark of the beast upon it for thereon are written almost every form of vice. But as McGregor re-entered his saloon hate and fear chased each other over his repulsive visage, for there had been that in Paul Rivers' manner as he made his carefully worded request that told McGregor he meant to have it respected and despite his bold words McGregor had his share of that fear and dread that always more or less haunts the evildoer.

"Hello, Mack. Look as if you'd seen a ghost," said a young man who was sitting in the back of McGregor's saloon at a card table. As McGregor made no reply he continued in a jesting tone:

"I saw the parson pass just now. Didn't he stop to pay his respects? Ah, yes; I see by your reverent looks he did. Well, why didn't you ask him in for a social glass and game? I'll declare, Mack, I'll begin to believe these ill-natured tales I hear of you bein' stingy if you don't do better." And the young man chuckled with satisfaction at the storm of rage to which he knew McGregor was longing to give way, yet dared not, because he, Jack Winters, was one of his best customers, and a general favorite because of his good humor and freeheartedness.

This last named virtue covered a multitude of sins in the eyes of that portion of McGregor's customers, who had not always the wherewithal to pay for their indulgence.

"You're welcome to your own opinion," retorted McGregor.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Or perhaps he only called to read you a friendly lecture and give you a little advice about running your business now. Jest a few hints on the latest fads and so on. Ah me, this world’s growin’ too good for such as you and I, Mack.”

“You can speak fer yer self,” replied McGregor, resolved not to betray the cause of Paul Rivers’ visit and not relishing the ill-concealed mirth of the three or four men present, he went behind the bar, and preparing himself a liberal glass of liquor, drained it off and resolved to stay where he was until the conversation turned.

“I’ve heard tell that this same Paul Rivers makes it uncommon hot for a certain class of saloon men up town,” remarked one of the men as McGregor disappeared.

“How so?” asked another. “It’s a legal business.”

“Oh, the business is legal enough as for that, but there’s several laws, you know, such as shuttin’ up Sundays, not sellin’ to minors and the like. Nobody bothers much about enforcin’ ’em though, an’ liquor dealers ain’t goin’ to obey ’em unless they have to. But this Paul Rivers, it seems, has took a notion to enforce these laws and has got some o’ the folks up-town stirred up a lot about it. The saloon men are gettin’ to hate him like pisin’. Make all kinds o’ threats behind his back but are always respectable enough when he’s around. I’ll bet he’s had a dozen of ’em jerked an’ fined this month.”

“An’ what good does it do?” asked Jack. “They don’t care for a fine once in a while, that is most of ’em don’t. Jist pay it and go on same as ever.”

“I know some of ’em don’t care, while others are slick enough or have influence enough with judge or jury to get off Scott free, but all the same they’re gettin’ not so bold. There you’ve won agin. Make it a hundred this time?”

“Just as well I reckon,” said Jack, “but don’t think fer a minit you’ve got the wool over my eyes. I’ve played with too many sharpies not to see into your little game.” For well he knew the professional gambler before him had only allowed him to win the smaller wagers in order to induce him to make larger ones. “So I jist give you fair

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

warnin' this is my last game an' if you want to quit about even you'd better get down to biz."

"Oh! You may beat; it's all luck you know," replied the gambler.

"No, I don't know," said Jack. "But who is this Paul Rivers, and why should he go about molestin' honest men who only want to make an honest livin'?" This last was said for the benefit of McGregor, who had emerged from behind the bar.

"I don't know much about him only he's been to the city off and on fifteen years preachin' and doctorin': they say he's great at doctorin', but don't doctor any body much but poor folks and don't charge nothin'. Kind of a queer duck I guess, but he ain't no special friend o' mine."

Jack flashed his companion a keen glance.

"Why, I naterly supposed you was the best o' friends. What's to pay? Caught you at some o' your tricks, I'll bet. There you've won of course," he continued, throwing down the cards. "Come on let's have a drink, I'm one of Mack's best friends and can drink money or no money. Here, Mack, two of your very best."

"Here's to your health and luck, Mr. Winters," said the gambler.

"And now I must be gettin' across to my own shebang. If you're in town till supper time come around. I can beat the hotel women a cookin'." And Jack sauntered out and crossed the street to a small house where hung the sign—Jack Winters' Restaurant—in large letters. Here he had lived six years alone and as far as anyone in Rose-dale knew he was entirely alone in the world.

Meanwhile Paul Rivers had overtaken the child and asked, as he kindly took her hand:

"How is your baby sister, Ada?"

"Oh, sir; we think she's worse and I was trying to find papa, but I can't." And a world of grief and misery looked from the large, dark eyes.

"I think he is at home now," said Mr. Rivers. "I saw him going that way a few moments ago."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

And Ada hurried on. Poor child! He could not tell her how he had found her father on the street beastly drunk, and only with difficulty had succeeded in getting him to his home. For Paul Rivers better than any one else understood what her sensitive nature suffered because of her father's intemperance.

She was not a pretty child. Small for her age, with a figure slightly stooped; a sallow complexion and thin, sharp features. That is Ada Everett, the drunkard's daughter. The only redeeming thing about her was her large, dark eyes from which a troubled and anxious soul seemed always looking out as though amazed at the wickedness it was obliged to witness and wondering why it was so. One could almost read her thoughts in her eyes ere they were expressed in words and doubtless this was what so angered McGregor. He could read in her eyes the horror and disgust she felt for him and his business.

The Everetts had not always lived at Rosedale—for that is the name by which the village is known—nor had Mr. Everett always been a drunkard. Indeed Ada could remember the happy though humble home that had been their's less than five years ago. They had lived in a city then some fifty miles from Rosedale, and Mr. Everett had been a prosperous carpenter. To be sure he took an occasional drink with a friend; most men did; he had argued when his wife had remonstrated, and it was nothing. Did she think he would be a drunkard? He was not so weak as that.

Then an enterprising prospector, while searching for gold found, not gold, but coal of an extra fine quality near Rosedale, and that hitherto unpretentious little town straightway started on a "boom." Carpenters were in great demand and Mr. Everett had persuaded his wife that they could do much better there than in the city, where all occupations were crowded, and Mrs. Everett had consented to the change, partly because her husband's arguments sounded reasonable, but chiefly because he had recently formed the acquaintance of men whom she feared would prove his ruin unless he could be separated from them.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

They were not bad men from a worldly point of view. Oh, no! They were simply jolly good fellows, who loved a good joke and a good dinner washed down by a good glass of wine or anything else that suited their fancy at the time.

Their place of meeting was at a club, restaurant or some hotel, and occasionally at the home of one of the men. Mrs. Everett never knew how her husband became acquainted with his jolly, and as he insisted, harmless companions; she had never met but one or two of them herself and knew but little of them except that, since her husband's acquaintance with them, he frequently came home the worse for drink—a think that had never occurred before.

When questioned he would reply that he did not drink any more than the others, but some way it would go to his head. She need not worry. He didn't want to seem odd by refusing what all the rest took as a matter of course. He would get used to it soon, then it wouldn't hurt him. Jim Browning said that was the way it served him at first and now he can drink as much as any one and never show it.

“But why get used to it? Why not let it alone?” Mrs. Everett had persisted.

“Oh, because everybody drinks a little. It's sociable and looks snobbish to refuse, especially one's friends,” was the reply and Mr. Everett had persisted in his social glass while it with equal persistency kept going to his head.

So matters stood when Mr. Everett proposed moving to Rosedale for reasons given and as before stated Mrs. Everett readily consented, hoping that once her husband was separated from his gay companions he would loose his desire for the social glass.

Accordingly their small but comfortable home was sold and the removal took place at once.

They rented the only place to be had at the time, a small house at the edge of the town.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

There were many such, built by the coal company especially for the miners, but the Everetts were glad to get it until they could look about a bit, as Mr. Everett told his wife, when they would buy a new home with the money they had received for the old.

Mr. Everett at once received all the work he could do, for he was a good carpenter, and carpenters good and bad were in great demand at Rosedale.

But danger, the more dangerous because unsuspected, was lurking near, and one evening as Mr. Everett was going home from work he saw standing in the door of Rosedale's new saloon, an old friend, and as he drew near he was greeted thus:

"Why Dan Everett, where did you spring from? Look like you'd been at work, too. Don't live here, do you?"

"Yes; we moved about a month ago, but hanged if I expected to run onto you here," was the reply, and Mr. Everett wiped the sweat from his face, for he had been working and the day was warm.

"Oh, I've been here nearly a year now," said Mr. Bunn, for that was the man's name. "I came away kind o' sudden you know and didn't tell anybody where I was goin'. Fact is I saw such a good opening here for another saloon, I made up my mind to try the business a spell. Yep, this place is mine and I'll tell you I'm making money. That livery stable 'cross there 's mine, too. But come in and rest an' let me give you something to cool you off a mite."

Daniel Everett entered his friend's saloon in spite of a dim consciousness that he ought not to do so and accepted the glass of iced liquor offered him, remarking as he returned the empty glass:

"That is good, Bunn, and no mistake. Guess I'll take another; it's cooling and this has been the devil of a day."

"Of course, all right," said the loquacious Mr. Bunn, as he refilled his glass. "An' now, Dan, as you've jist arrived you can't know the ins and outs o' the place as I do. Now there's two saloons here an' it's a wonder there ain't more, it's sich a good place; but nobody that is anybody

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

goes to McGregor's. Sich a place as he does keep! Quarrels and fights to beat the devil, in short a good place for peaceable folks to stay away from, I can tell you, and as I keep as good stuff as he does an' sell it as cheap I get most all the trade; at least the respectable trade. Of course 'tain't exactly the kind o' business I'd like for a life time. I don't aim to stay in it always, but I thought it too good a chance to get a good start to let slip. Good chances don't fly around every day."

Mr. Everett agreed with his friend about "good chances" being scarce, congratulated him on his shrewdness in outwitting his competitor and promised to patronize him whenever he wanted anything in his line, which proved far too often for his own welfare or the happiness of his family. He not only drank but allowed himself to be persuaded into gambling and soon lost all the money received from the sale of his home.

This was a great blow to Mrs. Everett, who was in delicate health, but her husband seemed so penitent that she instantly buried her own disappointment and began to plan to reduce expenses. She might get plain sewing to do. Ada was large enough to help with the work, even Charles and James could do something and baby Dan was almost three years old and not much trouble.

It seemed to her now as she looked back over the last two years of her life that it was almost impossible to crowd so much pain and disappointment into two short years.

When Mr. Everett had work the most of his earnings went to his friend Bunn, but more often he was without work for no one cared to employ a man as unreliable as he had become.

They were obliged to leave the comfortable if small house where they first moved and go to a miserable little hut near the center of the town. It was in plain view of Mr. Bunn's saloon, though some little distance from it, and here, after about a year's residence at Rosedale, Mrs. Ever-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ett's fifth child was born—a lovely blue-eyed girl baby, that was named Lilly.

About this time Mr. Everett gave up the carpenter trade entirely and went to work in the mines. There he worked when there was work and spent both his time and money at Mr. Bunn's when there was not, so that before Mrs. Everett was able to be at work at all, she was obliged to depend almost entirely upon herself for the support of her children, and as the people of Rosedale were, for the most part in very moderate circumstances, and therefore did most of their work themselves, it was not always easy to get work to do. Then her babe fell ill and she could not give up the work she had secured, the children must have bread, the rent must be paid, so Ada who had cared for it almost entirely so far must do so still while the mother sewed or washed by day, but it was she who watched its restless tossings at night and the work of the day and loss of rest at night was fast breaking her not too strong constitution.

But these troubles were not her worst. If God in His mercy saw fit to take her babe out of misery and want she felt that she could be resigned to His will and if she was obliged to live the life she was now living until death, it would not be long.

It was the welfare of her husband about which she was mostly concerned. If he persisted in leading a dissipated, drunken life where would it end?

Perhaps you have read harrowing tales of the separation of negro families in the days of slavery. Yet if the negro woman's master sold her husband away where she might not hope to see him again in this life she could still have the hope of meeting him in the great beyond, where there are no slaves, masters or partings.

But the wife of the slave to strong drink can have no such hope. If she believes her Bible she knows if her husband lives and dies a drunkard he is lost forever.

Then, too, Mrs. Everett's children were a source of anxiety. Perhaps in spite of all she could do her boys would

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

follow their father's example. She had hoped to be able to teach them that what their father did was right and to point them to him for their example. She had kept from them as long as possible the knowledge of his weakness for liquor, and only when she could no longer do so, did she undertake the difficult and humiliating task of teaching them that they must in no wise follow in their father's footsteps.

Ada, she felt, was safe; for during a series of meetings held by Mr. Rivers the winter before she had given her heart to Christ and became a member of the struggling little church, where he occasionally preached, and since then Paul Rivers had evinced a strong interest in her and called whenever he came to Rosedale, which was not often, for his time was almost all spent in the city as before mentioned.

He had on several occasions spoken to Mr. Everett of the dangerous life he was leading and tried to persuade him to give it up, but with no visible effect.

Mr. Everett would listen respectfully to what Mr. Rivers had to say, acknowledge he was not living right, perhaps stay away from Bunn's a day or two, and then go on as before.

He really tried some times to quit drinking. He knew his family needed all his earnings and when he was sober his conscience was never at rest. His wife's careworn face; Ada's appealing eyes and his two sons who, in their childish innocence, thought their father perfection and strove to imitate him in all they did, and lately the wasted form of his baby daughter—all were silent but powerful accusers—and he often told himself he would quit, but was sure to meet with too great a temptation sometimes in the shape of a generous friend (?), but more often it was simply his own craving for drink that led him on.

He had been drinking as already stated when Mr. Rivers found him and persuaded him to go to his home. He was lying on a lounge in a heavy sleep when Ada entered.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Mrs. Everett, who had been growing anxious about Ada since her husband had returned alone, was pacing the floor with the sick child in her arms, pausing occasionally to look down the fast darkening street and when she at last appeared she said almost impatiently:

“Well, child, you’re here at last. I was on the point of starting for you. You know I hate having you out by yourself so late. And you’ve been frightened, too. What was it?” Noticing for the first time her daughter’s pale face and dilating eyes.

“Not the dark, mamma,” was the reply. “But when I didn’t find papa at Mr. Bunn’s, I came past Mr. McGregor’s, and, oh, he is such a wicked man and talked so dreadful to me——”

“You didn’t go in there, Ada,” interrupted the mother.

“Oh, no! I wouldn’t, even at Mr. Bunn’s. It scares me just to stop at the door or even to pass by; I always want to run. I know they wouldn’t really hurt me, but I can’t help it.” And the still trembling child sank on a stool at her mother’s feet.

“You must never go to either place again, come what will,” said the mother, firmly. “I oughn’t ’ve allowed it at all, but I didn’t just see my way clear before and I think I know how you feel about saloons. I have the same feeling myself. It is something like the feeling one would experience if he stood at the mouth of the bottomless pit, Mr. Rivers preached of the other Sunday.”

Ada grew white again as her mother spoke.

“But what of papa, mamma? What will become of him?” she asked in an agonized whisper.

Mrs. Everett sighed. How could she teach her children the full horror of sin and still teach them to love and respect their father? and how teach them the certainty of its punishment without showing them his danger?

“Let us hope, Ada, that your papa will not always live as he does now, I have known men to repent and become good Christians after being drunkards for many years. We

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

can only hope and trust and now if you are rested a little I will see to supper while you sit by Lilly."

"Do you think she's any better, mamma?" asked Ada, turning her attention to the little wasted form in the crib.

"I can't tell yet. She isn't suffering like she was, but it is the medicine, I think. We can tell better when she 'wakes.'"

A week passed and there was still no change for the better in the sick child. And Daniel Everett had not touched liquor all week. Perhaps his love for his child had been stirred by the probability of losing her, or there had awakened within him a desire to throw off the chains of vice and be the man he once was. Anyway he had walked resolutely by Mr. Bunn's saloon every morning and night, for a week, without stopping.

Be it known when Mr. Bunn went into business he went into it in a businesslike way as every one should who expects to succeed. He had built his saloon near the edge of the town next the mines, for if the miners had to pass by the saloon going to and from their work they would be more apt to stop and take a drink than if they did not. Shrewd man, Mr. Bunn. But why not? Is his business not lawful? Then has he not a right to use every means in his power to increase it and make money by it?

"Mamma, do you think little sister will die?" asked Ada one morning as her mother was beginning a washing that must be done that day for one of her employers. Ada herself was clearing away the dishes and occasionally tip toeing to the adjoining room where the sick child lay sleeping.

Mrs. Everett finished rubbing the garment she had in her hands and wrung it out before replying.

"God only knows, Ada, but surely we can trust him to do what is best and if he sees fit to take her home a little before us we must try not to grieve for her, but be thankful she will never know want, or poverty."

"You think she'll die. Oh, mamma—" And throwing herself in a chair Ada sobbed bitterly. The tears stood in the mother's eyes, too, but she forced them back. She had

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

no time for grief. At least it must not interfere with her work. She paused a moment, however, beside her sobbing daughter and gently stroking her hair said:

"It's only natural, Ada, for you to grieve so. You've been almost more her mother than I have, but let us not grieve so for her. God knows best. He only takes our dear ones that we may learn to care more for heavenly things and less for things of this earth."

"I know, I know," sobbed Ada. "But how can I live without her? She's all the little sister I've got."

"God will give us strength to bear even greater burdens than this, if we trust him," was the reply, and with a few more comforting words, the mother returned to her work.

She knew her child must die and she loved it just as much as you, Madam, loved that darling child that you sat by day and night or held close in your arms as though by your own strength and watchfulness you would hold back the grim monster.

And Mrs. Everett, too, would have loved to sit by her babe as it slept and held it in her arms when it waked. It could be with her such a short time. If she might only feast her eyes upon it while it was here. But such a luxury was not for such as she. She must think of her living children as well as the dying one. If she gave way to grief, where would her children look for bread!

Ada hushed her sobbing presently and finished her work. She, too, was early learning to grieve in silence. After calling her little brothers from their play, long enough to wash them and brush their hair, she seated herself beside her baby sister and watched the little wasted form as it occasionally moved or moaned in its sleep. The child waked before the mother's work was done and began to fret. Ada took it tenderly in her arms and walked softly up and down the room, now humming a soothing tune and now pausing to look anxiously into the child's pain drawn face, until at last the mother's work was finished and she could care for her child herself.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Ada prepared their scanty dinner, but neither mother nor daughter could eat. The mother, almost exhausted by her morning's work, took her baby, and seated herself in a low rocker by the window, but as the child continued to fret and moan, she would arise and pace wearily around the room, sinking again into her chair, only when she felt she could not take another step.

So the afternoon passed. The physician came and went but he could do nothing now, except leave powders to lessen the suffering, and in an hour or so the child grew quiet and seemed to sleep.

"She's slept more today than common. It looks like she might be better after all," said Ada, while helping prepare the evening meal.

"Yes, she's rested more than common, and that's some comfort." Replying to the first part of Ada's remarks.

The poor child had tried all day to gather hope from the mother's face or from a look or word of the physician, or from some change in the baby itself, but had found nothing except that it seemed to rest a little better, and this she knew herself, must be caused by the medicine, and she only spoke as she did with a faint hope that perhaps her mother thought otherwise. But she knew at once by the guarded answer that there was little or no chance for the baby's life.

When Mr. Everett came in that evening he asked about the baby for the first time since its illness. Once his mind was clear from whisky he realized what a brute he had been but not being willing to acknowledge his fault, he had maintained a sullen silence during his brief period of sobriety, and his wife fearing she might anger him had avoided either alluding to the past or even praising him for his present soberness. Yet she had almost unconsciously begun to hope that if their babe must die, its death might mark a turning point in its father's life.

Have you ever stood beside a loved child and watched its feeble struggles in the jaws of death when every moan went through your heart like a dart as you stood by, utterly powerless?

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

If you have, you can perhaps understand how Mrs. Everett suffered as she watched through those long dark hours alone. Ada had insisted upon staying up the night before and tonight the mother had sent her early to bed.

"O, God, grant her suffering may soon cease," prayed Mrs. Everett as she bent over the moaning child.

Mr. Everett had thrown himself on a lounge after supper and tried to sleep. But sleep would not come. Try as he would, he could not shake off a dreadful feeling of guilt. He tried as he lay there to convince himself that he was not such a bad fellow as he might be. Wasn't he staying at home here in this little hot room when it was so cool and pleasant at Mr. Bunn's? And didn't he aim to give his wife every cent of his week's wages? He had meant to give it to her tonight but he wanted to apologize and have a little talk when he gave it to her. He believed he would feel better, but she was so absorbed with the baby. He would wait until morning and they could talk while she cooked breakfast and filled his bucket. He arose when he heard his wife's words and crossing the room, stood by the crib a moment and looked at the child in silence.

"She don't cry much. What makes you think she's so bad?" he asked.

"She's too weak to cry. Don't you see how poor she is, And don't you remember how fat and pretty she was?" said Mrs. Everett.

"Well, when was the doctor here?" he asked, after a pause.

"About three o'clock today, but he says he can't do anything more for her."

Mr. Everett went back to his lounge and this time had no trouble in going to sleep. It had not occurred to him to stay up with his wife nor did Mrs. Everett feel any disappointment at his want of sympathy. She had learned to depend almost entirely upon herself for everything. Then, too, she was so absorbed in her child she scarcely knew when her husband left the crib. She thought vaguely that perhaps she ought to talk with him and try to encourage him some

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

way but was so nervous and tired, so exhausted in mind, rather than body, that she felt that one extra exertion or one more strain, be it ever so light, would drive her mad. Almost another hour passed in silence and the child again grew restless and Ada, being awakened by its cries, came to her mother's side."

"Oh, what is it mamma? Does she hurt so bad? Can't we do anything? Is she going to die?" An unusually strong spasm of pain had convulsed the little body and left it so motionless and white.

"Yes, Ada, I believe the end is near, and we ought to be thankful. She will be out of suffering then, and away from misery and want. It will be hard for us at first but we will learn to think more of the world where she will be and less of the things we soon must leave. Perhaps, too, your father may be influenced to live a better life."

But comforting words were lost on Ada now, for **anxious** as she was about her father, the certainty of soon losing her baby sister, drove every other thought from her mind, and she crept away to the kitchen to be alone with her grief.

The little one had learned to lisp but one word and that word was "sistie." She had preferred Ada to every one, not excepting the mother, it was Ada who taught her to take the few tottering steps she had taken and Ada who had washed and dressed her almost ever since she was born and what wonder the world looked dark at thought of losing her now. Ada wept some time in silence, stifling her sobs lest they should disturb the baby, then she began to pray a simple, childish prayer: "Oh, God, it is so hard to let you have my little sister, but please, God won't you give her the very nicest robe you've got; she never had anything nice here; papa's money all goes for whisky and mamma only has enough for bread." As her grief subsided as the most bitter grief must, she thought of her mother's last words and continued her broken but earnest prayer. "And dear God if you would only keep my papa from drinking I would be so glad. I want to go to Sunday-school and take the boys but we don't have any clothes fit. Please help papa quit drink-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ing and I won't cry for little sister." Ada grew calm as she finished her prayer and returned to her seat by her mother, resolved to sit with her through the night.

"Can't I hold her awhile mamma?" she asked. "I'd so love to do it." And the mother placed the child in her arms on a pillow saying:

"Yes, you may hold her, there is some mending that must be done—sit here between the door and window; it will be cooler. I will hurry while she is resting." And seating herself so she could watch every change in her child's face the tired mother took up her work.

It had always been Mrs. Everett's custom to go carefully over every garment after the weekly ironing was done, replace missing buttons, mend every rend and strengthen every weak place, but since the baby's illness she had put aside a few pieces every week that were scarcely worth mending anyway. But the baby's illness made it less possible to buy new clothes and now, as Mrs. Everett just stated they must be mended and her needle flew fast and faster until several garments had been disposed of and it was nearly midnight.

The child now roused from the stupor in which it had lain the greater part of the night and began to moan and feebly toss its head from side to side. The mother took it in her arms and stepped nearer the door, thinking perhaps to cool the feverish little body. Ada placed her mother a chair and then stood by in agonized suspense.

"Mamma, must I bring the medicine?" she asked at length.

"I'm afraid she can't swallow it, but we can try."

Ada brought the medicine and Mrs. Everett poured a few drops between the child's lips, but it began to choke and strangle and she stopped saying; "It's no use Ada, she can't swallow it."

"Oh, can't we do anything?" persisted Ada.

"Only pray that the little dear's suffering may soon be over," was the reply.

The end came shortly after midnight. Mrs. Everett had lifted the babe from the pillow and was holding it close to

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

her bosom as though to soothe its pain or hush the pitiful moaning when, after another slight convulsion the little life went out.

Ada had been standing by silently weeping and when her mother lay the still little form back on the pillow, she knew without asking, that her baby sister was dead.

It had not occurred to Mrs. Everett to waken her husband, in fact as the child had grown worse she had forgotten his presence, nor remembered it until the child was dead.

She crossed the room to his side, wondering in a vague way if she should have called him sooner.

“Dan, Dan, wake up. The baby’s dead.”

Mr. Everett turned and rubbed his eyes sleepily.

“Eh, what?”

“The baby’s dead. You’d better go for Mrs. Brown. She said she’d come if I needed her.”

Mr. Everett arose and looked at his wife curiously. He expected to see her prostrated with grief, and could not understand why she was so calm now that the worst had really come. He could not know that a human heart may receive blow on blow, bruise on bruise, until there seems to be no feeling left, nor did he understand how one may experience grief and disappointment until they grow accustomed to it, in a sense, and expect nothing else. Not that they cease to suffer but learn to bear all burdens calmly, with no outward sign.

Mr. Everett went for and soon returned with Mrs. Brown, who was the nearest neighbor, motherly and benevolent and some years older than Mrs. Everett. She had foreseen for some time that the child could not long survive. She also knew the cramped circumstances of the Everetts so she had herself bought material and made a little robe for the child. It was not expensive but it was neat and pretty, and it was not until her babe was dressed in it and laid upon the clean white bed that Mrs. Everett’s tears began to flow. Then it was more the thoughtful kindness of her neighbor than grief for her child that caused them.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"It was so good of you to think of it; I don't know how I'd have managed. It's so pretty too." Gently smoothing down the folds of lace. "Poor little thing, how she suffered!" And Mrs. Everett sank upon a chair near the bed and wept.

Mrs. Brown said nothing. She thought "a good cry," as she called it, would do the poor woman more good than a world of talk.

Ada had thrown herself across her brother's bed and sobbed herself to sleep. Mr. Everett had left the room and the two women were alone. Finally Mrs. Brown came and sat beside the mother and tried in her homely way to sooth her.

"It's what we've all got to come to, and think what your baby's missed by goin' now. I'd try to look at it like that an' be reconciled. There ain't many women that has a family of children but what has to lose one or more of 'em."

"I know," replied Mrs. Everett. "And if I could feel like all had been done for her that could have been done I could feel better. But when I think may be it was want of attention or something I couldn't give her it seems dreadful. I never could take care of her like I did the others and I think it was my milk being overheated that made her sick, at first but I couldn't see any way to help it. I had to think of the other children too."

This was the nearest Mrs. Everett had ever come to complaining or in any way referring to her husband's neglect and Mrs. Brown determined to take advantage of it and give her neighbor the "friendly advice" she had been longing to give for some time. So after a moment's thought she said:

"May be you'll think this ain't no time to say so, but I'm thinkin' if you don't quit workin' so hard you won't be long followin' your baby. You don't look like you ever was very stout and you've had enough to kill a stout woman since you've lived here."

"I know it," said Mrs. Everett, "but I can't let my children go hungry and naked while I can work."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“No, I know you can’t. No mother deservin’ the name could. It’s a man’s place to pervide for his family hissself. You’ve never said nothin’ but I can see how your man does an’ sometimes I think my Jim ’d a been doin’ the same way if I’d a put up with it. I don’t often mention it but thought I’d tell you. We’d only been married a few years when Jim went with a gang of lumbermen up the mountains to be gone a spell and when he came back I noticed he smelt o’ whisky most o’ the time. I didn’t say nothin’ for a long time fearin’ to make him worse an’ he got so bad he spent most all he made at McGregor’s. I worried over it an’ said nothin’ till I actually went crazy and was in the insane asylum three months. We had three children then an’ when I was sent home from the asylum it was the same thing over. Jim drunk up about all he made. I thought I’d tried keepin’ still long enough. I talked to Jim and told him how it worried me an’ how bad we needed the money. He was drinkin’ some an’ he told me lots o’ women made their own livin’ and never bothered their men for money. I don’t deny I’ve got a temper an’ that raised it. I told Jim he shouldn’t bring licker home to drink before the children; that our house wouldn’t hold me an’ a bottle o’ whisky, too, an’ that if I had to make a livin’ while he spent his money for rum I’d not do it an’ live with him. An’ if he didn’t straighten himself up an’ act like a decent man ort, I’d take the children an’ go. It was the first time Jim ’d ever seen me real mad an’ as I’d been crazy once he didn’t know but what I might get kind o’ off agin an’ really do all I’d threatened an’ I don’t think he’s ever tasted liquor since an’ is as good a Christian man as anyone need want, where he might a’ been a drunkard if he’d been let alone. I’ll tell you honey I don’t believe in quarrels an’ I don’t believe in women tryin’ to be boss all the time, but I don’t think a racket once in a while in a good cause is the worst thing in the world.”

“And would you have left him if he hadn’t stopped?” asked Mrs. Everett.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Of course I would,” replied Mrs. Brown; decidedly. “It would a’ been bad I know but not as bad as livin’ with him an’ may be bringin’ little children into the world to be like him. No, indeed Jim never drank a drop when we was married an’ if he’d a kept it up I’d a’ left him. I know what you’re thinkin’ that women ought to love an’ obey their husbands no matter what comes an’ I know the Bible says so, but it says too for a man to love his wife as Christ loved the church an’ a man that does that’s not a goin’ to spend his money for liquor while his wife makes a livin’ for his children an’ does without things he ought to provide, an’ if a man can’t live up to the Bible a little I don’t see as he’s got any call to find fault with us weaker mortals for not doin’ it.”

Mrs. Everett made no reply and as Mrs. Brown had already said more than she at first intended she too, lapsed into silence. But Mrs. Everett was trying to think of her earlier life, although her brain seemed too weary to act readily, she was trying to recall the weeks or months just before her marriage. Did Dan drink then, she wondered. She had never thought about it before. But Mrs. Brown’s assurance that her husband had not done so, made her wonder if Mr. Everett had, and if it would have made any difference with her if she had known it, or if he did take an occasional drink then, had she any right to complain now? She had not thought to ask him. she trusted him entirely else she would not have married him, neither could she believe it would be right for her to leave him now or even to threaten to do so, though in the case of her friend it seemed to have resulted satisfactorily.

“Now then everything’s done an’ you just lay down here an’ get a mite o’ rest. I’ll stay till four o’clock, but I’ll have to go then to get the folks off to work,” Mrs. Brown said, and she led Mrs. Everett to the bed for the much needed rest.

Mr. Everett had only gone as far as the kitchen, when he left the room, and once when his wife entered it, for something Mrs. Brown had called for, she noticed him lying face

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

downward on a lounge. She spoke to him once but he did not answer, and supposing him to be asleep, she did not disturb him.

But Mr. Everett was not asleep. He did not reply when his wife spoke because he feared she would talk of their dead baby. Of course he had heard the conversation between Mrs. Brown and his wife. She thought, then, it was want of proper care and nourishment that had killed the babe, and Mrs. Brown thought his wife was working herself to death to feed and clothe the other children and he could not deny but that it looked like it was true—and if so, who was to blame? Something seemed saying to him, “You have killed your child and are killing your wife.” Pshaw it’s so plagued hot in here no wonder a fellow feels bad. I’ll go out and get some air. And Mr. Everett arose and stepped softly through the back door into the yard, where he paced restlessly back and forth for some time, glancing anon at the light that still shone from Mr. Bunn’s window. He had not thought of going there when he left the kitchen, but now he believed he would just go over a moment to tell Mr. Bunn about the baby. He would feel better after talking to some one and he and Bunn were old friends. He would not be gone long and Mollie would not miss him. He could hear the sound of voices occasionally from within.

“Why, howdy do? Ain’t seen you for an age friend Daniel,” was the hearty greeting of Mr. Bunn as Mr. Everett entered the saloon.

“No, our baby’s been real sick a long time and just died awhile ago.” And Mr. Everett’s voice grew husky. “I felt kind o’ bad and seein’ a light thought I’d come over and tell you, while the women were dressing it.”

The smile left Mr. Bunn’s face and there was an awkward pause, for words of sympathy did not come readily to the lips of the usually talkative Mr. Bunn. Presently, however, a happy thought struck him and with a smile that was meant to be sympathetic he said:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Well, it’s too bad, but this hot weather’s bad on babies: My wife says so, but you look bad yourself: lost a lot o’ sleep I reckon, settin’ up with the baby and need something to kind o’ brace you up. Come and have some iced whisky; best thing in the world to steady the nerves and strengthen abody. It’s my treat you understand.” And Mr. Bunn busied himself preparing the drink for his friend, also one for himself, talking meanwhile.

“You see I’m by myself tonight. Customers usually scarce after one o’clock an’ Stubbs’ is over to the stable tonight, as the boy that keeps it has gone to a dance somewhere in the country and ain’t got back yet. I’m generally at home by this time but as Stubbs sleeps in here I thought I’d stay till he got back. Stubbs is a good hand and don’t mind helpin’ at the stable and even drivin’ if he’s needed, which is more’n most clerks ’d do.” As Mr. Bunn finished speaking he held the glass of liquor toward his friend.

Now Daniel Everett knew his weakness and realized the danger he was in. Of course he ought not to have tasted liquor that night of all nights, but the reader may as well understand at once that it is not the purpose of the writer to paint heroes in this brief narrative or even ordinary human nature at its best, but to give the reader if possible some slight idea of how his weaker and it may be coarser brother is effected by a business sanctioned by our government, though cursed by our God.

Mr. Everett did hesitate a moment before taking the offered glass but on a more pressing invitation accepted and drank it hastily. He did feel better and decided to have another and by the time it was finished Mr. Everett was on pretty good terms with himself. What if the baby was dead? It wouldn’t do any good to worry, besides it was better off: Mrs. Brown said so. And with these thoughts for excuses Mr. Everett took a third glass, drained it off as he had its predecessors, and called for a fourth; but here Mr. Bunn felt it his duty as Mr. Everett’s friend to remonstrate.

“You know Dan you mustn’t get drunk. ’Twouldn’t look well, an’ your baby just dead. You’ve had enough now and

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

had better go on home. Your wife'll wonder where you're at."

"What if she does? guess she's used to wonderin'. Mebbe you think I ain't got the stuff. Well, I have, see here. Now hand'er over—or I'll go to Mack's an' finish up."

The sight of the bill Mr. Everett exhibited and his threat to go to McGregor's proved too much for Bunn's conscience and he handed his friend a fourth glass, saying:

"Well, Daniel, you know my soft spot. I never could stand to have any o' my friends go to sich a place as Mack's, but I'd hate to see you drunk agin'; you've done real well this time stayin' sober, so long, an' I hope you'll keep it up. A man can take a drink or two an' still not make a fool o' hisself."

"Oh, to the devil with your good advice," was the reply. "Now put me up a pint to take along an' I'll be goin'."

Mr. Bunn heaved a sigh over the ungratefulness of man as he complied with his friend's request.

"There ti's Dan; but don't drink any more now an' go straight home. You don't thank me now for my good advice but mebbe you will some day. Here's your change."

"That's not enough," said Mr. Everett emphatically. "I give you ten and this's only change fer a five."

"Your mistaken Dan. Think I'd cheat an old customer like you? You're drunk er'n I thought you was. Come, I'll help you across the street. Your change is alright."

"O yes, yer mighty good to your friends Za Bunn's long's you can git all ther money. I was a fool fer a comin' here tonight. I know that was a ten. Let go my arm. I ain't as drunk as you thought I was. That's it. I won't have none o' your help. What's to run over a feller this time o' night?"

"Well, Dan, rather than have any hard feelins' I'll give you change for a ten but 'twas only a five you gave me."

"Jist keep it then. I won't have none o' your money, it's worse'n your whisky." And Mr. Everett stalked bravely albeit a little unsteadily, from the room and started for home.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Mr. Bunn heaved a sigh of relief as his friend passed from view.

"I begun to think I was goin' to have trouble with Dan. Four glasses don't make him as drunk as it used to and he tumbled. But how else can I stay even since I've got to let him have it, money or no money I've got to watch my chances to git even." And salving his conscience thus, Mr. Bunn stretched himself comfortably on his couch and fell asleep.

The loss of his money partly sobered Mr. Everett and he tried to think how it could have happend if Mr. Bunn did not take it. He recalled the events of the previous afternoon as best he could. He remembered the paymaster handing the ten dollar bill and he knew he had not spent a cent nor had it changed. Yes, Bunn must have taken it and he had meant to give it all to Mollie. It had been so long since he had given her money and now it was gone.

He wouldn't have thought Bunn would do him such a trick at such a time too, and—O, well, it was no use to worry, he had meant all right. If Mollie and Mrs. Brown hadn't talked as they did he might not have gone to Bunn's. Yes, come to think of it he believed it was partly Mollie's fault, another drink or two from the "pint," Bunn had given him, thoroughly convinced him of the fact, yet he didn't want to tell her how his money had gone for she had often tried to convince him that Bunn was not really his friend: that he only wanted his money. No he wouldn't tell her how he lost his money. She wouldn't say anything; only look so white and say nothing. If she would only quarrel and scold he could feel abused and have some excuse for going back to Bunn's.

When he reached home he crept quietly through the kitchen door and stretching himself on the floor his rather disconnected thoughts were soon lost in sleep.

Mrs. Brown aroused her tired friend only when she felt obliged to return to her own family.

When Ada waked she took her place beside the crib and refused to leave it even when called to breakfast.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Mrs. Everett did not wake her husband until breakfast was on the table then she was obliged to shake him several times ere she succeeded in rousing him.

“Why, Dan, what did you lie here for all night? Why didn’t you stay on the lounge?”

Mr. Everett had no very clear recollection of the why’s or wherefore’s of anything at first but finally muttered something about being so hot up there. Mrs. Everett said no more until they were seated at the table then she began timidly:

“Did they pay you last night Dan? We’ll have to get a coffin for the baby you know, and I only have a few cents ahead. Mrs. Brown gave us the dress for her to be buried in so we’ll only have the coffin to buy, and Oh, yes, a place to bury her. I’d forgotten that.”

Varied and conflicting were the thoughts that ran through Mr. Everett’s mind while his wife was speaking. He was inwardly raging at Bunn, at what he called his own bad luck, at his wife and even good Mrs. Brown came in for her share of mental abuse. In short he blamed everybody and everything except himself, for the loss of his week’s wages but seeing Mollie expected an answer he said.

“Yes, they paid me; but work has been bad this week and ’twasn’t much, only ten dollars ——”

“Ten dollars,” said Mrs. Everett, as her husband paused a moment to think how he would better tell the rest. “Why that’s a good deal. If you can make that much every week we can soon pay for everything.”

“But I ain’t got it now,” said he desperately. “I meant to give it to you last night but you was so busy with the baby, I thought I’d wait till morning, and now it’s gone.”

Mrs. Everett gave him one searching look and read the truth, or a part of it, at once. She arose from the table and left the room without a word, an overwhelming feeling of anger and resentment toward her husband welling up in her bosom. It was not so much the loss of the money, though that was needed badly, but the fact that he could and actually had, gone to drinking again and that while his child

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

lay a corpse at home. To her it seemed if ever he had cared the least, for it or for her he could not have done so. Yet, she would not reproach him. He should never—no one should ever be able to say that she made him worse by reproaches or angry words, though she felt obliged this morning to leave his presence to avoid it. Once in the presence of her dead child—his child—her anger began to cool. Perhaps she had judged him hastily. His conduct looked bad on the face of it, but perhaps there was something back of it she could not understand. He had meant to give her the money. Of that she felt certain; anyway she would not give place to anger. She had no time nor strength to spare for it. She returned to the kitchen and found her husband sitting as she had left him. Glancing up half ashamed and half sullen he said:

“You know I couldn’t help it, don’t you Mollie? I didn’t mean to touch a drop. I only went over to tell Bunn about the baby and he offered me a drink. Said I needed it to cheer me up and I don’t know hardly how it all went. There was nobody there but Bunn either, and I didn’t play any.”

“We won’t talk about it now, Dan,” answered his wife quietly. “It can’t be helped and we will manage some way.”

“I’ll do the managing myself,” said Mr. Everett decidedly. “You’ve had it to do long enough. I think I can borrow a little money and work promises to be better from now on. I think Bunn gave me a lesson in friendship last night I won’t soon forget. I didn’t aim to tell you but he just the same as stole that money and I think it’ll be the last of mine he’ll ever get.”

“We will hope so Dan,” was the reply, but Mrs. Everett did not look as hopeful at his remarks as her husband would have liked and he was forced to acknowledge she had little cause to do so, judging from the past.

While Mr. Everett still sat at the table trying to decide where he would better go to secure the necessary loan there came a knock at the front door. Mrs. Everett opened it and Paul Rivers stepped quietly into the room. After a few words of greeting and sympathy for Mrs. Everett and Ada

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

he asked for Mr. Everett. On being directed to the kitchen he entered it and taking Mr. Everett by the hand said:

"I lost a child once and believe I know how to feel for you in this dark hour, but believe me, my dear brother, God sends everything in love and mercy and if we will only let him, he will draw us nearer to himself through the very sorrow he sends upon us." The tears gathered in Mr. Everett's eyes while Paul Rivers spoke: The first tears he had shed for his child, but he said nothing and Mr. Rivers continued:

"I regret very much that I am obliged to leave for the city this morning. I would like to stay with you until your child is buried, but I have work there that cannot be delayed. I thought, perhaps, brother Everett, as work has not been the best lately and your babe been ill so long you might be in need of a little money; if so I shall be glad to lend it to you."

Mr. Everett stared at the speaker a moment in amazement. He had thought perhaps he might be able to borrow a little money from one or two men in Rosedale by agreeing to let them draw his pay; he thought under the circumstances they might let him have enough to bury his child, but he had not been sure and had dreaded asking them, and here was this man offering it without being asked as though he hadn't a doubt in the world but that it would be returned. For a moment he could say nothing, and then realizing that Mr. Rivers expected a reply, he collected his scattered senses and with some dignity said:

"Yes, sir, I'd be very glad of a little loan just now if you can spare it. I was just going out to try to get one but as you say, work's been bad and not many of the boys 'd have it to let. They think work'll be better now and I can pay back in a few weeks."

"Yes, I'm sure you can, and I'm only glad to have it to lend you," said Mr. Rivers, handing him a bill. With a few more words of comfort for the family, generally, for Mrs. Everett and Ada had entered the room and listened in silent wonder at the good man's words, Mr. Rivers took his leave and was soon whirling toward that great city where sin,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

want and misery so greatly abound; where we shall follow him shortly, and learn something of his work in that seething caldron of humanity.

His own soul was often sick at the revolting scenes he was obliged to witness, but he had gone bravely on doing his utmost to alleviate the pain, give peace to the troubled soul and food to the famishing body. He had lost his wife and only child twenty-five years ago and since then had devoted his whole time to the poor, sinful and afflicted. In most cases he gave aid, neither asking nor expecting any return except the inward peace that comes to all who faithfully fulfill their mission and when he gave the money to Mr. Everett in the form of a loan, he did it because he thought his implied confidence would help him try to overcome his appetite for liquor. Then, too, if Mr. Everett could return the money it would help some one more needy than he; and Paul Rivers knew of many so destitute that the wants of the Everetts sank into insignificance beside them.

And he had not judged amiss, for Mr. Everett returned the money in a few weeks, with interest and thanks and felt more like a man than he had for a long time—and as he continued sober from week to week, Mrs. Everett again began to hope that he would not drink again, and that perhaps their child's death had not been in vain.

CHAPTER II.

In the meantime the more progressive element of Rosedale's inhabitants had been preparing to have a fair.

They had never had a fair, but since the town had grown so much and was too far from other county seats for many of the people to attend conveniently, they were resolved to have a fair of their own. A committee of six of the more influential citizens were appointed to make necessary arrangements and they met from time to time, either in Tom Long's store or John Reynolds' blacksmith shop, to make reports and discuss plans.

John Reynolds had been unanimously chosen chairman of said committee. He was a strong, rather heavily built man, a little past the meridian of life, with an honest ruddy face, and black hair and beard as yet untouched by time. His chest, shoulders and arms showed great bands of muscles, strong as the iron rods he so readily shaped to suit the varied needs of his customers.

John Reynolds had brought his family, a wife and six children, to Rosedale when that now flourishing town consisted of only six houses besides his own. He, like the Everett's, had been glad to leave a crowded city for the beautiful scenery and pure mountain air of Rosedale, and more so as his wife was then a semi-invalid and he hoped the change would benefit her. He invested his savings in timbered land and settled down to his chosen work. Four of the children had married and gone to homes of their own, leaving one son and daughter yet at home.

As the town grew and people became acquainted with Mr. Reynolds he was much respected both for his upright Christian character and his fearlessness in doing what he believed to be right, though they could not always understand his

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

reasons or agree with him in many things. He was pronounced "set" in his ways and given the soubriquet of "deacon," and as "the deacon" he was known by every one in Rosedale.

And John was "set" in his ways: Slow to form an opinion, when once it was formed, he was about as movable as the rugged mountains around him. He made friends slowly and there was only one man in Rosedale who could call him an intimate friend. That man was Tom Long, or "Long Tom" as he was more commonly known. He had never married and came to this little village shortly after Mr. Reynolds, in fact his chief reason for coming was because he wished to be near his friend, for they had been friends through boyhood, and side by side had borne the trials and hardships of the long dark civil war, and Tom had left his right arm on the bloody fields of Shiloh. Then when the fearful struggle at last ended the young comrades found they were bound too closely together to be long separated, and after John's marriage it was decided that Tom should spend at least a part of the year with him. Since coming to Rosedale, however, he had slept in his store and taken his meals at Jack Winter's. He had built up an excellent trade and despite his one arm he and his one clerk were managing a prosperous business.

Tom and John were not unlike in disposition for Tom was fully as "set" in his way as was John and they not infrequently had what they called friendly quarrels. But Tom Long, though considered a good moral man, was not a Christian. He was tall and thin with gray beard and hair and looked almost twenty years older than John, though really only a few years his friend's senior. His speech, always plain, was often tinged with sarcasm; yet the possessor of a kind heart withal.

Behold him then as he awaits the arrival of the committee, for it meets this afternoon to make a few final arrangements and the place of meeting is the back of Tom's store, where a few empty goods boxes and nail kegs have been placed to

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

accommodate the expected guests and they begin to saunter leisurely in about half an hour before the appointed time.

"Hello; everybody here but the deacon," remarked one gentleman depositing himself on a nail keg and helping himself to the cigars, Tom had placed on the counter for the benefit of the committee.

"Oh, but Bunn's scotchin' cause we ain't goin' to have no drinkin' or gamblin' on the ground," he continued after a few puffs at his cigar. "Says the whole thing'll be a dead failure cause people's always been used to havin' such things at fairs and lots of 'em won't come when they find it out."

"Of course, as usual, Bunn's awful anxious for the people to have a good time and for the committee to make a success of the fair. He's one o' these unselfish critters that never thinks of number one, and of course we're ever so much obliged to him, though I'm thinkin' we'll have to stick to our agreement with John; John ain't one to give up once he's set his foot down," said Tom Long.

"Well, I don't see as the deacon need to be so squeanish," replied another. "I don't go much on such things myself, but there's lots that does and they'll be disappointed as Bunn says, but the deacon owns the only respectable place to have it at, an' so he can have thing's purty much his own way."

"That's not fair to John," replied Tom quickly. "He never did have anything to do with such businesses and we have no right to expect him to have now."

"But he wouldn't really be havin' anything to do with it," persisted the first speaker. "He could just a rented the grove to the committee without conditions and that would a throwed the responsibility on the committee."

"Well, my young friend," replied Tom. "If you ever have the good luck to become acquainted with John Reynolds you won't find him a man anxious to throw his own responsibilities on other people's shoulders (though I doubt said responsibilities would have been gratefully shouldered). No, sir. John knew about the kind o' times we'd have if gambling was allowed and whisky too handy, so he just

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

made his own terms and the rest of us'll have to come to 'em or hunt another place for the fair, which you all know we won't find, closer than three miles."

"Oh, we'll have to give in; but it did seem to me since the fair was for all kinds of people we ought to have all kinds of amusements. There's Carl Newman now was countin' on havin' a fortune wheel. He's willin' to pay big for the privilege of having it, and wouldn't hardly believe it when I told him 'twouldn't be allowed. Said he never knew of a fair without something of the kind and I can't think there'd have been much drinkin'. Jack Winters is going to have a lunch stand and ice cream and such, so he'll have to stay sober to look after that and Dan Everett ain't touched a drop since his baby was buried, and they're the only two around here that's really quarrelsome when they're drinkin'."

"What about Carl Newman," asked another. "I'd like to see him beat fer kickin' up a muss when he's drunk."

"And a fortune wheel wouldn't keep him straight neither for he can gamble, drink, quarrel and run a fortune wheel all at once," added Tom.

"Oh, as fer Carl he's quit drinkin'; didn't you know? Well he has, fact is he had to or stand a good chance passin' in his checks soon. You see Carl can't stand it like some and the last few times he was on a spree he had the tremors so bad he nearly died. His wife couldn't manage him and had to call the neighbors in. I was with him a time or two myself an' its awful."

"Too bad," said Tom. "Carl's a good fellow if he'd let gamblin' and rum alone. But as I said it's no use to say anything about havin' such things at the fair, besides—but here comes John."

As John Reynolds approached there was a perceptable change in the positions and occupations of the different members of the committee. The man who had been smoking quietly threw his cigar into the stove, while another straightened his coat collar, another removed his hat and one gath-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ered himself from the counter where he had been comfortably reclining.

After a hearty greeting and hand-shake all around John took the only real chair visible which had by silent consent been left for his use, and called the committee to order for business.

Without tiring the reader with the meeting in detail we will say that the remaining business was speedily though wisely disposed of. The gentlemen who favored having gambling and whisky on the ground did not mention it after John's arrival and as it only lacked two weeks until the time set for the fair it was decided to push things as rapidly as possible until everything was complete.

Tom walked back to the shop with John after the committee adjourned; John rekindled his fire, gave the bellows a few vigorous pulls, thrust a piece of iron into the fire and then turned his attention to his friend who had seated himself on a bench and was saying, "Yes, I think it'll all go off fine, providing we have good weather nearly everybody round says they're coming. I wasn't much in for it at first but since it's going to be, I'm anxious to have it go off all right."

"Oh, it'll go off all right," replied John. "The main object is to get the people together and give them a chance to talk over their different enterprises and learn what all is being done in our county."

"I heard some of 'em sayin' Bunn and Carl Newman's a little put out cause they can't have a gamblin' and drinkin' house or two," said Tom.

"So," replied John reflectively, "and that's what you'd been talking about when I went in. I supposed 'twas something of the sort. Bunn ought to be thankful he's allowed to keep his saloon open and sell drinks in town without wanting to sell on the ground too. And it seems to me Newman isn't far from his grave and had best be thinking of other things than gambling. I was with him about a month ago when he had the worst spell of delirium tremens I ever saw.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

I didn't think he'd get through that time, and I don't believe he could stand another."

"They say he's quit drinkin' now though," said Tom.

"It's to be hoped so," replied John, taking his iron from the fire and giving it a mighty stroke with a hammer.

"Well, he'll have a mighty hard row to hoe for awhile," resumed Tom. "I had a little experience that way myself you know when we was in the army. 'Twas when I was laid up with this arm, or rather when I was laid up without it," corrected Tom grimly. "They give it to me to kind o' lessen the pain and after I was well I kept at it till I saw I couldn't stand it. You know something of the time I had breaking myself and since then I can't help but feel sorry for a feller when I see him sober up and try to quit and then maybe go at it again harder than ever. I know just what he's got to contend with."

"It's hard to quit any bad habit," said John. "But I suppose it's harder to quit the drink habit on account of the effect it has on the system, but the trouble with most folks is they try to do it all themselves instead of letting the Lord help them, as he wants to do. If people would just take the Lord at His word and let Him do for them what they can't do for themselves they wouldn't make such a mess of their lives as they do. There's Carl now trying to save himself. Says he don't aim to drink any more and I don't suppose there's a day passes but what he's at one place or the other gambling and no doubt sooner or later he'll be tempted into drinking again, where if he'd only trust the Lord to help him and pay a little heed to His advice and not walk straight into temptation; he might come out all right yet. I know you reformed yourself, but it hadn't got the hold on you it has on Carl."

"Oh, I don't know," replied Tom, shifting a little uneasily on his seat. "I'm thinkin' the Lord helped me some or I shouldn't have made it as easy as I did."

John dropped hammer and iron and stared at his friend in surprise.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"I know I've always claimed the honor of it myself and I don't wonder at you being surprised but that preacher that comes here once in a while kind o' gave me a shakin' up last winter and some way I'm beginnin' to see things different. I have an idee it'll end in me joinin' his church yet."

John came over to Tom and grasped his hand saying:

"God bless you old boy. I hope it will; I always thought you was too good a chap for the devil to get."

"So I'm thinkin' myself," replied Tom smiling, although there was a mist in his eyes that almost hid his friend from view. "But I've always put it off you know and then John most o' the preachers we've had around here ain't been what they might; you've always tried to hold up for them though."

"There aren't many of us what we might be," replied John. "Besides we ought to look above weak humanity for an example."

"I know, but someway when I can't have faith in the man, I ain't no use for the preacher, but this Mr. Rivers now he seems to be made o' the right stuff. He lives right up to what he preaches, and I don't believe he'd be afraid to meet the old Nick himself face to face and tell him what he thought of him."

"He's got nothing to fear. He's got the Lord on his side and so he can face anything," replied John.

"And what I like about him most is the way he comes down on the saloons," continued Tom. "Bunn and Mack's both heard of it; I believe Bunn was there and heard him once himself. Of course, they're both down on him; give him fits behind his back, but it's fun to see 'em git out o' sight when they see him coming along the street."

"It's a degrading business," said John, "and I reckon Mr. Rivers having seen more of it than most people is what makes him so down on them."

Now it must be said that John did not altogether agree with some of Mr. Rivers' views regarding the liquor traffic. John himself had given the matter little thought, but had always supposed the liquor dealers themselves were wholly

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

to blame for the business, and that no one else had the right or power to interfere; that people ought to have sense enough to stay away from them, and if they had not they deserved little pity.

But Mr. Rivers believed it the solemn duty of every Christian to be doing the utmost in his power to exterminate this great evil. No one else, he insisted, was greatly interested in its overthrow, and that such a desirable event would only be brought to pass by Christian people uniting and in one voice demanding it. He did not believe Christian men should bind themselves to any political party, but, united, should stand ready to support the one pledged to the most good. In this way they could hope to rid their country of much evil and more effectually spread the Gospel—the true Christian's highest aim. Fanatic? Well, may the Lord send us many such. But John could not accept such views. He had formed his opinions politically, over thirty years ago, and he did not believe in "turncoats." He couldn't let Tom know these things, however; not yet. It might prove a straw in his way and hold him back a while longer; so he added:

"Yes, Mr. Rivers is all you think him, and more, and you just go ahead and lay in a good stock of religion. You'll find it the best investment you ever made."

"I guess I will, John. I've always tried to live straight, but it takes more'n that I'm thinkin' to make a man safe. But I must be goin'. I'll just come round to the school-house Sunday. You have prayer-meetin', don't you?"

"Yes, we have Sunday school and prayer-meeting every Sunday. We don't have much of a crowd, but we hope it helps what does come." And after another hearty handshake the two friends parted, Tom walking toward his store, while John returned to his neglected iron. It was cold and the fire almost out; but little cared he, for as he rekindled the fire and thrust in the iron there was a happy smile on his face and a suspicion of moisture in his eyes.

Fair-time came at last with ideal weather; all arrangements were perfect, and if any one missed the fortune wheel

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

or liquor stand there were no complaints. The first three or four days passed pleasantly, and the crowds began to diminish somewhat. It was the greatest event in the history of Rosedale, and people came from great distances in wagons, buggies and on horseback. There had been a balloon ascension, a ball game, several horse races and a bicycle race, all for the pure fun of it, with no betting, and the people had shown great appreciation, and on this, the next to the last day, Tom Long and John Reynolds stood near the entrance gates congratulating themselves on the general success of the fair.

"I tell you, John, it's going off fine. Everybody's havin' a good time; it's paying in a money way, and'll be a help to the farmers and cattle raisers in lots o' ways. There ain't been nobody drunk, either, till to-day I noticed two or three kind o' tipsy, but they was quiet about it."

"Yes, I'm very well satisfied so far," replied John, who had been looking at something up the road while Tom was speaking.

"What is it?" asked Tom, noticing his friend's intent gaze, and following it, exclaimed:

"It's a horse and buggy, but I can't see any one in it!"

"Yes, there's two men, or boys, in it. Watch 'em whip that horse, and he's already coming as fast as he can," said John.

"Drunk, both of 'em, I'll bet my hat. Reckon we could stop 'em?"

"We can try," said John. "You get on the other side of the road and I'll stay on this. We can likely get him by the bits. It's the only chance I see."

Tom was across the road before John ceased speaking, and both men stood silently awaiting the arrival of the maddened and terrified animal. But just as it came within a few yards of where they stood a piece of white paper fluttered from the roadside beneath its feet. It seemed such a little thing, yet the horse swerved violently to one side and threw both occupants with terrible force against a pile of rock by the roadside. The buggy shafts were

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

broken and the buggy itself overturned. It had all occurred so suddenly that only the very few persons near the gates knew anything about it, and the horse had kicked himself free of the harness and was well on his way back to town before these few recovered from the shock the dreadful occurrence gave them sufficiently to investigate.

It was Tom Long who first advanced toward the pile of rocks where lay the unconscious forms of the two boys, for such they proved to be.

"Well, I'm afraid they're done fur," said he. "Here's what's done the mischief." He continued picking up a half emptied bottle of whisky.

"This one's alive yet," said John Reynolds, who had been stooping over the other boy.

"Well, this one's dead," said Tom. "Look here," and he pointed to a sharp piece of rock projecting just above the boy's head, covered with blood, hair and brains.

"Well, we've got to get them some place where the doctor can examine them," said John. "I wonder if there's any one here that knows them," and John looked inquiringly at the crowd that was fast gathering. Tom had started in search of the physician and a place to take the boys for the examination.

"Why, this is Jim Aikman," said one man, indicating the dead young man. "Him and his mother an' little sister lives up my way on a little farm Jim tends. His pa died last winter. Ain't hurt bad. is he?" looking inquiringly at John.

"Why, he's dead," answered John.

"Not dead?" was the surprised reply. "Surely Jim ain't dead," stooping down to examine him more closely. "Well, if that ain't a bloomin' shame; it'll kill his mother, shure. Jim wasn't a bad boy, neither. I never knowed him to touch liquor of any kind. Don't understand how he came to do it this time. Why, here's Bob Wilds, too. He don't live far from me," continued the man, noticing for the first

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

time the other boy, who was lying on the opposite side of the pile of rocks from his friend.

"I'm glad you know them both," said John. "He's not dead, but looks like he was pretty bad hurt. Maybe you could find some one to take them home and tell their folks?" suggested John.

"It would be an onpleasant thing to do," replied the man, meditatively. "Yes, a mighty onpleasant thing to do; but it's got to be did, an' I reckon now I'd as well do it as anybody. Yes. I'll take 'em home," he concluded. "Me and my folks come down in a spring wagon this mornin', and my wife is goin' to stay over night with her sister here, and the children, too; but I'll just look around and hunt up another neighbor or two that's here and we'll take the poor boys home right away. They ain't neither one of 'em twenty years old yet, an' if Bob lives I reckon this'll be a lesson to him," and the man departed in search of his friends.

Tom returned shortly with the physician, and the boys were conveyed to a vacant corner of the art hall, where beds were being hastily prepared for them.

The boy designated as Bob Wilds regained consciousness as they placed him on the bed. He half raised himself in the bed and had seen the lifeless form of his friend before it could be prevented.

"Jim's hurt, too. How bad is he hurt? Tell me quick," as every one hesitated.

The physician requested the people, with the exception of John Reynolds, to leave him alone with his patient, and when they were gone he told the boy quietly that his friend was dead, and John explained how it had occurred.

"Oh, I know well enough how it happened," said the boy, bitterly. "An' I'd rather it would 'a bin me killed than Jim. I wasn't drunk. You see we was drivin' Jim's colt. We've been a month breakin' him an' gettin' him so we could drive him here. When we started we didn't aim to drink a drop, but we wasn't much acquainted with anybody down here but Jim Stubbs. He used to work for pa

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

a few years ago, so we went round to see him a minute, and he was awful tickled to see us and insisted on givin' us a treat—he called it. We drank a glass with him, and as I've bin used to takin' a drink once in a while it didn't hurt me, but that one glass made Jim wilder'n two or three glasses ort to 'a' done, and he had Stubbs put him up a bottle to take with him. I tried to get him not to drink it, but he would anyhow, and got wilder'n ever. I took the lines away from him, intendin' to manage the colt myself, but Jim got hold o' the whip, an' after that I couldn't do a thing."

"Well, never mind now; you've talked too much already I fear. Just let me have a look at that cut on your head. We'll set your arm later."

The cut on the head was not serious, the arm and shoulder having received the brunt of the shock.

"There, you're all right now, my boy; but you've had a close call, and I would strongly advise you to give liquor a wide berth hereafter. It's proved the ruin of many as fine a lad as you, one way and another."

"I know. Poor Jim; it'll kill his mother, an' some way I feel to blame. Jim wouldn't 'a' went to Bunn's if I hadn't, and he wouldn't have drunk if I hadn't."

"Well, you can't help it now, and you are not to worry or you may bring on a fever. I'm going home with you myself when your neighbor comes and you are rested a little."

The neighbor arrived shortly, and the wounded boy was made as comfortable as possible in the back of his large spring wagon, while the dead one was placed near the front. Then with the physician, the owner of the conveyance and one other man the boys were started on their way home, the one to be buried and mourned for by a heart-broken mother and sister, and the other to recover only after a long illness, for fever set in, and it was six weeks before he at last arose from his bed a sadder but a much wiser boy.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

After seeing them started on their sad journey John wandered aimlessly around the grounds. He greatly deplored the recent accident, though he had said but little about it.

"It's dreadful, to be sure; still it's a wonder we've got along so well," he mused. "Ordinarily, on such occasions, every fellow that ever took a dram—and some that didn't—thinks it their duty to get drunk, and there's generally a row or two. I'm more than glad I stuck to it and didn't let them sell whisky out here. I'd have felt to blame for this if I hadn't. They say he was all his mother had to depend on since her husband died last winter. We'll have to inquire after them occasionally and help them if they need it. My! what a lot of trouble one little miss-step can cause. Hello, what's this? Some o' Jack Winters' work I've no doubt. Wonder if he's drinking now? If he is, we'll have trouble in earnest."

John had been taking careful note of everybody and everything as he walked along; but it was not until he had gone almost around the grounds that he came across anything amiss. A short distance from the cattle pens, and in close proximity to Jack Winters' stand, stood a low building made of narrow strips of timber some three inches apart. It had been unoccupied so far, and what it was originally intended for we can not say; but as John came in sight of it this evening he was surprised to notice quite a crowd around it, and some of the people seemed greatly amused at what was going on inside.

John hastened to see what the new attraction was, and found it to be some half-dozen men and boys more or less intoxicated. Some of them were apparently enjoying the curiosity they were exciting, and were singing, dancing and telling jokes. But two were having a sharp quarrel in one corner of the room that seemed likely to end in a fight. But it was not this that had aroused John's anxiety. Near the top of the building on a smooth board in large, red letters was printed this sign—"Bunn and McGregor Exhibit"—while just beneath it on a narrow shelf were a dozen or so beer and whisky bottles.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Of course, it’s Jack’s work,” continued John. “Nobody else would think of such a thing. I’m afraid his love for fun ’ll cause him trouble some day.”

He walked over to Jack’s stand, and was greatly relieved to find that fun-loving gentleman about his business perfectly sober. Still his mind was unchanged as to the originator of the Bunn and McGregor exhibit; so he said:

“Say, Jack, don’t you think you’re carrying it a little too far putting up that notice over there?”

“Oh, I don’t know, deacon,” replied Jack, a gleam of mischief coming into his blue eyes. “I thought all our business enterprises ought to be represented, and as Bunn an’ Mack kept a sendin’ out samples so promiscus, I thought I’d just get ’em all together an’ label ’em so people ’d know where they come from.”

“But you know they don’t like you anyway, Jack—Stubbs and Mack especially—and if they should see this they might cause trouble,” said John.

“I ain’t afraid o’ the whole gang of ’em, deacon; but Stubbs won’t cause no trouble today, for he was the first chap put in there, and there I mean for him to stay till he sobers up enough to talk decent around women. As for Mack, he’s never been out here yet, and I don’t reckon he’ll come now, and I’m not afraid of him if he does. I’ll pay the rent on the buildin’, deacon, so it shan’t cost ’em a cent, so I don’t see as they’ve got any kick a’comin’. Besides, some o’ them fellers was gettin’ rackety, an’ I think we’ve had accidents enough,” added Jack, more soberly.

“Well, if your way of getting rid of them don’t prove more ‘rackety’ I’ll be thanful,” said John, trying to decide whether he should leave Jack to manage his new enterprise to suit himself or insist on having the sign taken down.

“You see, deacon, I ’lowed if Bunn and Mack heard what we was doin’ with their boozy customers they’d quit and shut up till the fair is over. It’s only two days more, but them two days is likely to prove interestin’, ’cause every-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

body, myself included, has stayed sober about as long as they can, considerin' the importance of the occasion. But if Bunn an' Mack could be induced to shut up we might manage to live without it a day or so yet."

"Have it your way then," said John. "I won't interfere as long as you keep straight yourself."

"Oh, you needn't be oneasy 'bout me, deacon. I ain't time for nothin' o' the sort now. I may go in for a little whiz after it's all over; but it's about as much fun lookin' after the other chaps as 'tis to need lookin' after myself."

"It's a mighty risky kind of fun anyway, Jack, and don't always end like you expect it to, either," said John, as he walked away.

"Been viewin' the new entries?" asked Tom Long, coming across John a moment later.

"Yes, and I'm afraid it will cause trouble yet," replied John.

"No, it won't," said Tom. "I think Bunn 'll stop his part of it when he finds it out, and I'm goin' to town right away and will see that he finds it out," and Tom started on his mission smiling.

But the news Tom found had preceded him, and Bunn was already aware of his notoriety at the fair grounds, and great was his indignation not only at being pointed out as the maker of drunkards, but at having his name coupled with that of such a man as was his competitor. He declared his intention of going at once and removing the disgraceful sign and thrashing who ever put it up; but upon being told who was the author of the joke he changed his mind, and seeing Tom Long sauntering along the street, he resolved to lay his grievance before him, and beg him, as a member of the committee, to interfere in his behalf.

Tom listened to his tale of woe, keeping his face straight with difficulty, for he had enjoyed the joke almost as much as Jack himself.

"Well," said he, gravely, when Bunn had finished, "I don't see that I can help you any. You can't expect folks

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

out there to let your customers run loose and cut up any kind o' capers they please."

"Well, of course not," said Bunn, a little taken aback at Tom's cool way of treating what he considered an insult to himself. "I ain't complainin' 'cause they locked 'em up, if 'twas necessary, but they needn't have put up any names, and especially they needn't have put mine up with Mack's, makin' it look like I was as bad as him."

"Ain't you sold any whisky to-day?" asked Tom.

"Why, yes, I've sold some, but I don't think anybody got enough to make them drunk. I always advise my customers not to get drunk," said Bunn.

"But they don't always take your advice," said Tom. "That boy that got killed was drunk, and he got his stuff at your place. Liquor is about the same thing, I'm thinkin', whether it comes from your place or Mack's, and you needn't blame Jack for pilin' your customers an' Mack's in together. He couldn't tell 'em apart; besides, there was only one empty room, and if he wanted a little fun for his trouble—why, you know that's Jack. Tell you what I'll do, though. If you'll shut up your saloon and not sell another drink while the fair's goin' on I'll see that your name's took down after today. If you don't, it stays up there along side o' Mack's till the thing's over."

"But the trade's gettin' better, and I'd make more money the rest o' the week," persisted Bunn.

"Which means we'd likely have more accidents and fusses," replied Tom, resolutely. "No, if you don't shut up till the fair's over I shan't interfere, and John's of the same notion."

Bunn thought a moment before consenting, but as Tom started to go on he said:

"Well, I reckon money ain't everything, and you can call it a go."

"All right, I'll go out and see about it," replied Tom, feeling he had made a good bargain.

"Now if Mack could be induced to make the same agreement we might rest in peace the rest o' the week; but he

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ain't so careful of his reputation as Bunn is, and I don't suppose he'll do it."

And Tom's surmises proved correct, for when McGregor heard of what had occurred and of his competitor's agreement he gave a satisfied chuckle and swore he wouldn't close if they filled every building on the ground with drunkards and wrote his name on them all. He was in business to make money, and not for the good of the community, as was Bunn, and he didn't intend to show the white feather now there was a chance to make a little extra. So the words on the building were changed to "The McGregor Exhibit," and during the remaining two days it was well tenanted, though there were no more accidents or casualties.

"But I think it's all owin' to our roundin' 'em up in time," said Jack. "A few hours in that sweat-box 'll take the fight out o' the best of 'em."

He had kept his promise not to drink while the fair was going on, but after Saturday considered himself free to do as he chose. He had made considerable money during the week in spite of his well-known free-heartedness. Many of his acquaintances declared he gave away more than he sold. This, of course, was not true, but Jack had made it a point during the entire week never to let any one go hungry if he knew it. If they had the money to pay for what they ate, all right; if not, all right anyway; and when he saw a child looking wishfully at the tempting array of candies and nuts he never failed to present it with some of the coveted goodies. When joked about this weakness, as he frequently was, he would laugh and say:

"Oh, well, money won't stick to me anyway, and the more I give away the less I'll have to blow in myself, besides, I like to watch 'em eat the stuff. Some o' their daddies ain't able to buy it for 'em, and some's too plagued stingy."

Still, when the week ended Jack found himself several dollars ahead. Two of Jack's friends remained in town Saturday night, and after breakfast with Jack they all stepped in at Mr. Bunn's for a drink. On Sunday? Oh,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY:

yes. But I thought saloons had to close on Sundays. Not necessarily. We believe there is such a law tucked away somewhere, but it's seldom enforced, and but few people in Rosedale knew of its existence.

So, my friend, if you have any prudish prejudices against visiting a saloon on Sunday, you may stop outside until we come out. We won't be long.

"Something extra now, Stubbs," said Jack, as he walked to the bar followed by his friends. "I've done without longer than you have, which ain't sayin' much I know. Still I feel like treatin' myself kind o' nice over it. Yes, that'll do. Come on, gentlemen, here's luck to the fair in general, and the Bunn and Mack exhibit in particular."

Stubbs did not relish Jack's free and easy speech, and resented particularly his reference to himself as connected with the Bunn and McGregor exhibit. He had been drinking almost continually since his release from the pen, and his brain was not very clear this morning, and he was thirsting for revenge of some sort on Jack, and was trying to think how best to accomplish it while Jack and his friends were drinking.

"Here, Friend Stubbs, fill us up another. That was only a drop after so long a dry spell."

"It's a-plenty for me," said one of the men; "I don't want any more."

"Just two then, Stubbs. George, here, is a kind of a new hand, but Pete and me can stand any amount."

Jack drained his second glass and turned to go, when Stubbs cried angrily:

"Hold on here; you ain't paid yet."

Jack turned in surprise.

"What the dickens do you mean? You know I settle with Bunn every month."

"I mean we've lost so much doin' credit business we've quit it, an' cash is the go now," replied Stubbs.

"You never lost any on me," retorted Jack, "and what's more, I believe you're lying about this cash business, though I ain't next your game. But make out your bill and I'll

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

settle." He resumed smiling: "We don't want a row here on Sunday. 'T would ruin Bunn's reputation, to say nothing of yours an' mine."

Stubbs made out the bill and held it toward Jack, saying: "There's what you owe. Now shell out quick."

His words drew Jack's attention to himself as he meant they should, and he dropped the paper to the floor instead of placing it in Jack's hand. Supposing he had dropped it himself or been the cause of it, Jack stooped to pick it up, and Stubbs saw the opportunity he had longed and planned for. Seizing a beer bottle, he struck his unsuspecting victim a heavy blow on the temple just as he was rising.

His friends sprang forward, but Jack fell before they could reach him, and Stubbs had taken refuge behind the bar. One man stooped to examine Jack's wound and one strode to the bar and said:

"Jim Stubbs, you're a damned coward, an' I dare you out here for a fair fight."

Stubbs remained sullenly silent, and the man attending Jack said:

"Oh, come here, Pete, an' let's git Jack out o' here and see to him first. We can settle with that sneak afterwards."

"I reckon you're right, pard; but it seems to me sich cussedness ortn't to have to wait long."

"It can wait till we 'tend to Jack," was the reply; and together they carried him through the back door to his restaurant and placed him on his cot.

"That was a devil of a blow, and it's swellin' like the dickens," said Pete. "But 'taint a very deep cut, an' I reckon he's only stunned an' 'll come to directly. You git some water, while I fix some bandages out o' these hankers an' we'll have 'im patched up in no time. That was about the rottenest thing I ever saw. Stubbs must 'a' been more'n half boozy er he'd a counted on payin' fer this."

"Mebbe he aimed to kill him," suggested George.

"Well, he ain't done it then. See?" as Jack now opened his eyes. He looked puzzled a moment, and then with a grim smile said:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"So that was his game, was it? Well, two can play it, I reckon."

"You just keep cool, Jack. I'm going back directly to settle with that fellar myself. I hated puttin' it off so long, but George 'lowed we'd best 'tend to you first," said Pete, as he finished bathing the wound.

"You'll do nothin' o' the kind," said Jack, quickly, replying to the first part of his friend's speech. "I allow nobody to pay my debts but myself. It'll keep a few days, I reckon, but mind, I'll consider it as an insult if you go to pitchin' into Stubbs. I'm able to settle my own scores yet, an' I aim to do it. I'll be over this in a day or so, I reckon. Here, let's have a look at it before you put that thing on. Hand me the glass, George. Ah, yes. That'll leave me a strong reminder of Stubbs' regards, I'm thinkin'. But it's only borrowed;" and a look came over his handsome face that was not good to see.

"Now, Jack, if you won't let me settle with Stubbs for you, you'd better drop it. I know you're equal to a half-dozen in a fair fight, but you don't know how to fight a sneak an' had better stay away from there."

"That's what I think," said George. "They've all got a spite at you over that little joke, an' Mack's as sneakin' as Stubbs."

"I ain't afraid o' the whole outfit, an' some day I'll give a song and dance that'll leave 'em something to pitch bottles about. There ain't but one man in this town I'm afraid of, an' that's the deacon. Fact," he said, as his friends looked their surprise. "The deacon's generally mild as a lamb, but when he looks right square at you and tells you to do a thing you generally conclude to do it.

"A couple o' years ago we didn't have much law here and depended mostly on ourselves to keep peace and settle disputes. Well, one day I got on a whiz and started out to have a good time. I had my gun in my hand and ordered everybody I came across to git inside, and they got. It was fun to see 'em go. I made a clean sweep till I came to the deacon's shop. He was fixin' something outside and

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

paid no attention to me. That kind o' riled me, as I knowed he'd seen me comin'. I raised my gun an' told him 'twas time to go in and rest. He stopped hammerin' an' looked at me, but didn't seem to understand my remarks, so I repeated 'em and made 'em more forcible. Then he saw what I meant, but instead o' doin' what I 'lowed any respectable deacon ort to do under the circumstances, he jist raised the hammer he'd been usin' and knocked my gun clean across the road; then afore I could move he'd waltzed me into his shop and locked me up. 'Twas awful humiliatin', but had all come so sudden an' unexpected I don't see yet how I could 'a' helped it. Then while his blood was up he jist walked around to Mack's and told him if ever I killed anybody when I was drinkin' he'd head a percession to lynch him, and to this day I can't pick up courage enough to get on another drunk."

"'Twas kind o' disgustin', bein' treated so by a deacon," said Pete. "But you keep still now a spell. I'm goin' to stay with you till you're on your pegs agin."

It only took Jack a day to get on his pegs, but it was two weeks before he removed the bandage, disclosing a red scar that extended from the edge of his hair almost to his eye.

Jack was not one to bear malice, and by the time his wound was healed his anger had cooled somewhat, and he no longer wished to kill Stubbs, or even to hurt him seriously. Yet he was resolved that some time, somehow he would pay him for that cowardly blow.

Disgusting creatures, are they not? Why shock the respectable public with their doings? And yet we have some inklings that gentlemen (?), and even statesmen (?), sometimes indulge themselves to as great an extent as our humble characters. But their indulgence must, of course, be hushed up for the sake of society or some party or other, else we might not be reduced to such straits for characters. Yet even these same disgusting creatures have souls to save or lose, if they have no reputation, and it is for the human soul chiefly that we plead.

CHAPTER III.

In the most fashionable resident part of the city where Paul Rivers had gone lived the Bellmonts, a family of three, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Bellmont and a maiden aunt of the former. Mr. and Mrs. Bellmont had until a few years ago resided in New York City, while the aunt, Miss Alice Bellmont, had lived on what was known as the old Bellmont place on the Hudson, a fine old Colonial mansion, surrounded by acres and acres of rich land, much of which was still forest. William Bellmont was a genial, good-natured man of thirty, with an unusually keen sense of the ridiculous. He had lost both parents while quite young, and had been taken to Bellmont Place by his aunt and brought up in a thoroughly old-fashioned New England way, and knew but little of the world or worldly ways until he left college and went to New York City to study law under an old friend of his father.

From his father, who had lived in New York city at the time of his death, William inherited a comfortable fortune, and he was also the only heir to his aunt's valuable estates. These facts alone would have made him a desirable acquisition to society; but William was also the possessor of a handsome face and figure, which added greatly to his popularity, at least among the younger ladies. So when he went to the city he did not want for social favors, and before a year had passed he was engaged to Mr. Burten's daughter, a beautiful young lady called Isabelle, the only living child of the great lawyer and manufacturer, and every one called it a good match for both.

Isabelle was a member of a church near the heart of that great city, and shortly after their engagement she had expressed a wish that William belong to it too. He had

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

always had a deep respect and reverence for the Bible, inculcated into his mind when little more than an infant by his mother, and nourished and trained later by his aunt. Yet he had never made a profession of faith. But when Isabelle had suggested the matter to him he began to think seriously of it. He naturally supposed that her words were prompted by a sincere desire for his welfare; that she wished him to become a Christian that their lives might be more in harmony and their interests one. Her light way of speaking he set down to backwardness in speaking of such matters. He had noticed this backwardness in older Christians than Isabelle. So he resolved he would be a Christian. Why not? He had always meant to be, and what time more fitting than now, when he was preparing to take upon himself new duties and responsibilities?

And William had done so. Then with his changed nature came the missionary spirit or longing to help others, and he thought of the great good he and Isabelle might do with their great wealth. He resolved to give up his law studies. He had never liked it, and had begun its study more because his aunt thought he should learn some trade or profession, and this had been the first thing offered him. But now he would give it up, and he and Isabelle would constitute themselves missionaries to the poor of their city. He wondered a little how Isabelle, being a Christian, had been content to lead the gay life she had hitherto led. He meant to have a talk with her and tell her of his new experiences and intentions, but he had insisted upon an early wedding, and whenever he called had found her so full of the wedding, her trousseau and the wedding journey that he saw no chance for a serious conversation, and wondered why people couldn't get married without so much fuss. He postponed the talk until after the marriage, and a few weeks before that event surprised and pleased her by uniting with her church.

William had wished to spend the first few weeks of his married life at Bellmont, but Isabelle would be content with nothing but a trip to Europe. So to Europe they went,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

and when they returned, instead of the quiet life of service to the needy William had planned, Isabelle insisted upon the life she had been accustomed to leading. It was foolish to grow old and prosy simply because they were married. It was their duty to fill the place in society to which their birth and wealth entitled them. What if they were Christians? Many of the most conscientious Christians were in society.

She was not bad-natured, and with different training would have made a most lovable woman. She laughed at what she termed William's eccentricities, went with him slumming when she found it convenient, and cajoled him into attending her to balls and theaters, promising to reform when she grew old and ugly. It was mostly old or ugly persons who were so particular about such things.

William had found it easier to submit than to resist. Then, too, he had known her habits before he had married her; he should have objected then if he intended doing so at all. It was too late now, and William actually persuaded himself for a time that he was doing right in leading an idle, butterfly life.

So two years passed. Then their baby was born, a delicate little girl that only lived two days. Isabelle's health seemed to be declining after this, and her physician advised a change of climate and a glass or two of wine daily.

Before starting on their travels William and Isabelle spent a week at Bellmont to bid Miss Bellmont good-bye. William had exhausted his persuasive powers trying to induce his aunt to accompany them; but she refused to do so at that time, and they had journeyed from place to place until they came to this city. Isabelle was so captivated with the beautiful scenery and healthful climate that she declared herself worn out traveling and was resolved to live there. They could never find a more healthy or beautiful location. It was just the right distance from the beautiful snow-capped Rockies, which could be seen on a clear day rising above the Western horizon. The plain sloped gently to the East, until it finally lost itself in the

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

grassy prairies of the Middle West. The country for miles around was noted for its health-giving springs.

William had bought a luxurious home, and here for over three years they had lived.

Shortly after Mr. and Mrs. Bellmont located there, Miss Bellmont's two old servants died. They had been on the place ever since she could remember, and she found managing her large estates without them a greater burden than she cared to assume at her age, and she decided to let it and live with her nephew.

This step, however, was decided upon with great misgiving on the part of Miss Bellmont. Having always lived at her quiet country home, she dreaded leaving it for an ambitious, growing city, where all was rush, noise and confusion. But the old place was lonely since the death of the two servants, who had been friends and companions as well. Then, too, she occasionally received such doleful letters from William, describing their trials and tribulations with untrained servants, that were worse, since Isabelle of late was so frequently ill or indisposed. In short, they had about decided to rent the house and board. Now Miss Bellmont had a horror of boarding-houses for married folks, and William touched the right chord. She could not have loved an only son more than William, and since he was all she had in the world she resolved to brave the unpleasantness of city life and live with him, and here in this great, wicked city she had lived nearly six months.

Miss Bellmont was a few inches above the average height, with keen, black eyes, and hair that was just turning gray. Her movements and speech were usually decided, if not sharp; but she was kind-hearted, and the poor, among whom she went often, loved and respected her, although she was likely to call them careless, or even lazy, if they were so.

Her experience up to the time she came to the city had been confined to a very few poor families in the neighborhood and an occasional tramp; but she knew there were many destitute people in large cities, and she resolved to help the poor in her city all she could.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

To say she was frequently shocked and disgusted by the poverty and vice she encountered would be putting it mildly, and many a less resolute person would have given up in despair. But Miss Bellmont was not one to give up once she was convinced of her duty, and she believed it the duty of every child of God to help the poor and ignorant in every way possible.

William helped and encouraged her, though he frequently ridiculed her attempts to civilize the West, as he called it.

Isabelle no longer made a pretense of interesting herself in such things, and while claiming to be perfectly well, she frequently had headaches and attacks of nervousness that were growing worse so rapidly that Miss Bellmont was alarmed. Isabelle had taken her place again in society, and was one of its most popular leaders until lately, when she had been obliged to cancel several engagements, but would not acknowledge herself ill.

William had gradually ceased to accompany her to these various places of amusement, until now he flatly refused altogether.

It would be difficult to define William's thoughts and feelings at this time. He had often tried to do so himself, but gave it up in despair. He was thoroughly disgusted with the social world in which they lived; also with the churches they had attended. What was the matter, he wondered. He felt he was living an idle, purposeless life when it was in him to do something far different if only he knew how or where to begin. He had tried to explain his thoughts to his pastor, intending to ask his advice and assistance; but before he had succeeded in making his meaning clear he was slapped on the back, told he was a good fellow, and not to worry. Christians were not expected to be martyrs now-a-days, and he was doing all that was expected of him. William had said no more, and his pastor often wondered afterward at his irregularity at services.

He was becoming interested in the work his aunt was doing, and enjoyed helping her in spite of the light way he invariably spoke of it.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

It had taken Miss Bellmont some time to bring order and system into the chaotic household she found on her arrival, for Isabelle had gladly turned the entire management of the establishment over to her. She had reduced the two dozen servants Isabelle had thought indispensable down to six, and these, with her capable supervision, Isabelle admitted gave better satisfaction than the whole retinue had done before. It was only after the household was thoroughly reorganized that Miss Bellmont found time to begin her work among the needy, and her first visit was interesting and instructive in more ways than one. Needless to say, she found ample scope for the exercise of all her talents, and, as before stated, was frequently shocked by the wickedness and utter depravity of many whom she met, not only in the slums of the city, but in what was considered the best business part of it.

Here in the very heart of the city almost every other building was a liquor house of some sort—great palaces of sin, built with broken hearts and blighted lives upon a foundation of lost souls, and ornamented with the bread and clothes of hungry and naked children, they stand monuments to men's lusts and avarice, and a fearful blight on the fair name of America.

Music of some sort was usually to be heard at these places on afternoons and Sundays, and women standing in the doorways to attract the crowd, and since many of the proprietors of said places had found they could greatly increase their trade, as well as their income, by gratifying the brutal passions their liquors had augmented or aroused, there was not infrequently to be found back of the saloons brothel houses, worse, if possible, than the gilded death-traps in front. And at these elegant drinking parlors many of the most prominent men of the city—church members if you please—stopped daily, or at least frequently, to enjoy a social glass with a friend, and would have resented any intimation that it was wrong.

Children going to and from school must see and hear what was going on, and often stopped to listen to some coarse

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

jest or vulgar song. All this seemed dreadful to Miss Bellmont, but it was not here that her work lay, but in the most unpretentious part of the city, among the intensely ignorant and poor. There the miserable hovel or basement took the place of the grand palace on Broadway, and a squeaky violin was heard instead of the piano. But they were all upon the same common level with the same purpose in view—that of making money out of their fellow creature's weakness, ignorance or vice.

So it was into this last-named labyrinth of woe that Miss Bellmont plunged with her usual ability and determination, but at the end of a few weeks began to fear she lacked the patience to persevere in her chosen work. It did seem to her that after she had done so much for them and tried so hard to teach them the folly of living from day to day only to gratify vicious appetites, or indulge in foolish and wicked pleasures, that she should be able to see some change for the better in the people among whom she had been working. But from her point of view there were few encouraging signs, and one day while on her weekly rounds when she found one man at home the worse for drink, she read him a very personal lecture on men who spent their wages for drink, while their families starved, for the children were without food and the mother ill. Her sharp words, however, were modified by a well filled basket of food.

The very next place she called she found two women drunk and quarreling. This proved more than she could endure, and she turned and walked away, grim and speechless. It was bad enough for a man to drink, but a woman—

But when she related her experiences to William, as she usually did, he only laughed and said:

“Well, aunt, I don't know that it is any greater sin for a woman to drink than it is for a man. In the Bible we don't find the punishment prescribed for man, and then another added if it happens to be a woman.”

“Well, it's bad enough, either man or woman,” replied his aunt. “I did not know there could be so much wickedness in one city, and there is no effort made to stop it, either.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

What few laws we have are not enforced. The saloons are open Sundays, holidays and all the time."

"Of course they are," agreed William.

"Well, why is it allowed?" persisted Miss Bellmont. "Is it not the duty of the police to prevent such? Why do they not see that the laws are obeyed and saloons closed on holidays, and fighting and drunkenness prevented?"

"My dear aunt," said William, "our police force, for all its blue coats and brass buttons, is only a branch of common humanity, and as prone to mistakes as other mortals. It probably does not report or try to prevent crimes of this kind because it has not been instructed to do so, and until it is, will not likely trouble itself greatly about it."

"But I supposed it to be their duty to do so, and it seems to me they are very unprincipled and unpatriotic to permit such gross violation of laws," said Miss Bellmont, **with** energy.

"Well, that depends on how you look at it," replied William coolly. "You see there are so many kinds of principles and patriotism now-a-days it might puzzle a wiser head than that possessed by our average policeman to distinguish among them."

"There can be but one kind of patriotism at least," said Miss Bellmont, sharply. "Patriotism makes one quick to see his country's mistakes and dangers and causes him to do his utmost to arouse public opinion against them."

"For once, aunt, you are wrong," replied William, smiling. "That's the old Clay-Webster-Lincoln brand of patriotism, and has long since been shelved. In its stead we have a kind that prompts us to follow public opinion after it has been formed either by liquor dealers, Mormons or anything else that may take a notion to do so. Then we have a kind that prompts its possessors to blow themselves and each other up, cripple some people and scare others to death on fourth of July and other similar occasions. Then there is the very convenient and accommodating sort that permits its possessor to please the man with the most money or political pull, and it is with this last named kind that

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

our modern politician is usually filled and I don't see that we have any right to blame our policemen if they follow where our higher officials lead."

"Well, it is dishonest in either case," said Miss Bellmont decidedly, "and men who deliberately betray a trust and gain money by it are no better than thieves and ought to be in prison. That is my mind."

"No doubt you are right; and that reminds me—I saw Nora today and she said if you had any plain sewing to do she would be glad to have it. The——"

"What is that about Nora? Wants work, does she?"

"That Pat's been drinking again I suppose," broke in Isabelle, who had been half asleep on a sofa, and had paid no attention to the conversation until Nora's name was mentioned.

"I was saying," resumed William, "that the bank where Pat has his money has failed and every cent he and Nora had saved is gone, together with several thousands belonging to other persons. The cashier is also gone. Pat is naturally much discouraged as they had saved nearly enough to buy a little home and start Pat in business, and Nora wishes to do all she can to cheer him up, I suppose. She said as the baby was old enough not to be much trouble she thought she would try sewing. She said you and aunt used to like her sewing and perhaps would have some to do, and I promised to ask."

"Nora was a neat seamstress, I remember, when she was with you at Bellmont Place before you came here, and I think I can find her some work," said Miss Bellmont, promptly.

"Well, I can't say I pity Nora much," said Isabelle. "She had as good a place here as any girl could want and I told her what she'd come to when she left to marry that Pat O'Rien. He drank before they were married and if he doesn't go at it again it will surprise me. I haven't any sewing to do just now, and if I had I don't see that Nora has any right to depend on me just because she was my maid a few years."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Well, my dear, there’s no cause to excite yourself,” said William, for Isabelle had raised herself on the lounge and her face looked flushed and angry. “Nora simply wanted to know if you had the sewing, of course if you haven’t it’s alright. Nora didn’t seem very much discouraged; she thinks they can soon save enough again to buy the house they had in view.”

“Nora was lighthearted,” mused Miss Bellmont, who had a warm place in her heart for the good-natured, sunny tempered Irish girl who had spent the week at Bellmont as Isabelle’s maid.

“Yes, Nora was as good a maid as I ever had,” admitted Isabelle, rather reluctantly, “and she was just beginning to learn my ways when she must go and marry that Pat O’Rien. He used to drink and act dreadfully, but of course he made her think he’d quit and I guess he did, but I’ve expected all the time to hear of him beginning again, and if he does she needn’t expect any sympathy from me for I warned her well.

“If Pat’s been drinking, Nora didn’t mention it,” said Bellmont.

“No, she wouldn’t want me to know it if he was,” persisted Isabelle. “Nora for all her seeming good nature is proud and stubborn at times, and would dislike having to admit I was right about Pat.”

“What makes you so sure Pat is drinking or will do so? Many men do quit drinking and I see no reason why Pat should not, and really, Isabelle, you speak as though you would be glad if he should drink again,” said William, impatiently, and wondering for the hundredth time in the last few months what was coming over his wife.

He knew she had never sympathized with what she termed the lower class, nor exerted herself in any way to assist them, but she never until recently had permitted herself to make a vulgar or unladylike speech. Judge then of his surprise when she exclaimed, with unusual vigor:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Well, then, I would be glad. It would serve her right for leaving me as she did, and I hope she’ll live to repent it.”

“Quite a charitable speech, I must say,” said William, coolly, but his face showed he was puzzled as well as displeased.

Isabelle arose from the sofa as she spoke and had left the room without replying to Bellmont’s remark.

“I’m afraid, William, your wife is not well. She has not seemed like herself since I came,” said his aunt.

“That is it then,” said William, his face clearing. “I was stupid not to have thought of it sooner.” And he hastened to follow Isabelle to her room, but he found the door locked, and she refused to open it, saying she was quite well but did not wish to be disturbed.

She did seem quite herself at dinner and as she insisted that she was so, and disliked having her health referred to in any way the subject was dropped.

CHAPTER IV.

The next day being Sunday, Isabelle and Miss Bellmont came down to breakfast, dressed for church. William seldom attended church since the conversation with the pastor, before referred to. Miss Bellmont had tried to convince him he was doing wrong, but with no visible effect. Isabelle had scolded with no better success and in order to avoid an argument on the subject on Sunday mornings he usually arose before the ladies, breakfasted alone and went for a stroll.

"Has Mr. Bellmont breakfasted, James?" Isabelle asked, as they seated themselves at the table.

"Yes, ma'am," was the reply. "He said it was such a pleasant morning he would take a stroll in the parks before the sun got hot. and probably would not return until time for lunch."

"Always some excuse you see," said Isabelle, as James finished serving and left the room. "I don't see why William can't like Mr. Spruce. Everyone else does; I really think he stays away to spite me. Yes, I do," she repeated, noticing her listener's look of doubt. "You see when we were first married William had all sorts of unreasonable notions about a church member's duty. For instance, he tried to convince me it was our duty to give up our way of living and devote our time and money to charities, reforms and the like. Of course, I refused. Not that I don't believe in giving. I believe in people giving and doing what they can without greatly inconveniencing themselves, and I find many who think as I do. Mr. Spruce does and that I think is why William won't go to hear him."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Miss Bellmont did not venture a reply. To tell the truth she did not like Mr. Spruce herself, but had made it a life rule never to speak ill of a minister of the gospel.

Breakfast was finished in silence and the two ladies started for church. They were a little late—Isabelle enjoyed being late to church. She was always richly dressed and enjoyed seeing all eyes turn and follow her as she walked gracefully down the aisle.

Miss Bellmont thought being late to church a disgrace and settled herself quietly in the pew and gave her whole attention to the sermon.

Isabelle glanced carelessly over the congregation, making mental comments as she did so.

“Dear me, I wonder Mrs. Southers does not know it is bad form to wear such loud colors to church. There is Mrs. Orrison with her last season’s hat on. It must be true about Mr. Orrison losing money.” Here she turned her attention briefly to the sermon, but hearing nothing out of the ordinary, she continued surveying and criticising her friends and acquaintances occasionally turning her attention to the minister, until the sermon was over, when with Miss Bellmont she made her way to the carriage feeling she had conferred a great favor upon religion generally.

“Did you not admire Mr. Spruce’s elegant address?” she asked, as soon as they were seated in the carriage.

“I suppose it was good,” said Miss Bellmont, “but I was so vexed at being late; then it has been so long since I read Latin or Greek that I did not understand much of it.”

“One must be well educated and intelligent to appreciate Mr. Spruce’s sermons,” Isabelle continued, complacently. “William now says the most absurd things of him, but I assure you he preaches the latest and most popular doctrines.”

The ladies had scarcely put aside their hats when Bellmont entered.

“Why didn’t you come to church, William. You should set your fellow creatures a better example,” said Miss Bellmont, severely.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

William laughed.

"You are cross, aunt, but I can afford to be lenient. I've listened to Spruce's elegant Greek and Latin discourses myself and can heartily sympathize with one so recently afflicted. But I have been to church."

"Where, pray?" asked Isabelle.

"Oh, to a small but growing church in another part of town. It has not been built long and its members do not belong to the aristocracy, yet it promises to be a prosperous church in many ways. It was not the regular pastor who preached today, but a sort of missionary. Paul Rivers I believe he is called and quite a rousing sermon he gave us. No chance for a nap at all nor could I even divert my mind long enough to decide which were the safer investment, Texas cattle or gold mines."

"Why, what did he preach about so interesting?" asked Miss Bellmont, as they sat down to luncheon.

"Well, being a missionary he naturally preached a missionary sermon. He read the story of the judgment: the dividing of the goats and sheep, you know, and explained the sins of omission in a way I never heard before. He said the only person ever spoken of in the Bible as being in torment was the rich man who refused to feed Lazarus. He said the suffering among the poor the coming winter was likely to be great and he hoped the people of our country would not be found wanting in generosity. He said something else too I never heard from a pulpit before," continued William, after a pause. "He said that persons interested in the poor and who made a business of ministering to them would do well to look closely to the influences and causes that make and keep the people so. He said if a shepherd found that wolves were destroying his sheep, he did not devote all his time to burying his sheep or dressing their wounds, but took time for a wolf hunt and destroyed the wolves, and that Christianity while ministering to the destitute should also be doing its utmost to destroy the powers, or change the environments that make them so. He then went on to say that the liquor traffic

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

made more paupers and criminals than any other evil or combination of evils, and if we really wished to lessen the suffering and crime in our country, we should be fighting this great evil with all our strength. I'll tell you he can make a fellow feel like a useless piece of driftwood, wabbling around in the way."

"And I think he is right," said Miss Bellmont, warmly. "I've seen a good deal of poverty myself the last few weeks and I couldn't name a dozen cases that were not caused by drunkenness."

"Well, for my part, I don't see any sense in such talk," said Isabelle. "Now, Mr. Spruce preaches from the Bible just as much as that man does, but he leaves out the harrowing disagreeable parts and talks about the cheerful pleasant ones, and I always come away from church feeling comfortable and like I was doing all that could be expected of me."

"Exactly," laughed William. "It's a wise man that knows how to stay on good terms with his bread and butter and Mr. Spruce is nothing if not wise. He knows precisely how to please his congregation and he takes care to please it, because if he does not, why there are plenty who will."

"Oh, nonsense; but you always are so absurd," said Isabelle. "I don't believe in encouraging or upholding people in drunkenness or idleness, as you say that man does. I believe in folks depending on themselves. There always has been a senseless cry against the rich, but I did not know the clergy encouraged it. The idea of preaching such a sermon as you have described to such people."

"My dear, you must have slightly misunderstood my remarks. I did not say he was preaching to the destitute and distressed, but about them. I did not see any one who looked sick or hungry, neither do I remember seeing any one naked or in prison. The congregation, I should judge, belongs to what you would call the middle class."

"Well, any way, I don't believe in such sermons. Mr. Spruce never preaches them. He doesn't believe in har-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

rowing up one's feelings, especially on Sunday when one should rest and be at peace," replied Isabelle.

"Then it's all wrong of course," said William, dryly. "That missionary should be arrested for disturbing the peace, and anyway if there is anything in what he said, why the indications are that goats are going to be more stylish in those days than sheep, so we'll think no more about it." And William disposed himself comfortably on the sofa and took up a book.

"You see there has always been a class of persons who are never satisfied," said Isabelle, addressing Miss Bellmont, and ignoring William's speech. "They are always hunting up the bad things in the world and agitating some reform or other. I don't see why they can't let things alone. I'm sure there are enough good things in the world, if only one cares to look for them."

"Why I suppose you believe in spreading the gospel and trying to make the world better?" said Miss Bellmont.

"Certainly! Of course I believe in sending missionaries and all that. What I mean, is all this talk about prohibiting the sale and use of wines and other drinks seems foolish to me. People don't have to spend their money for it if they don't want to, and if they do I can't see that it's anybody's business but their own."

"But God has made it the business of the strong to protect the weak. If you will read the eight-second Psalm, you will see that God's people are particularly enjoined to do so. Now, you can readily see how the liquor business preys upon the poor and ignorant of our own country alone, and it seems to me every one interested in the salvation of souls can see what a hindrance the whole business is to the influence of the gospel."

"Oh, well; I can't say I see it just that way. There always has been wine and good men drink it and always have. It makes one feel better when one is nervous or has the blues. Then it looks so pretty in the glasses on the table. I really hope it won't go out of style."

Now, to some of our optimistic friends with model livers,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

we presume Isabelle's speech will sound very sweet and saintly, and they will praise her greatly for being able to see something good in everything. But Miss Bellmont believed that whatever good there might be in liquors was more than swallowed up in the great evils it caused, and she had no word of praise for Isabelle's speech, and she had never been accused of being a pessimist, neither had she ever had cause to find fault with her liver. She made no reply to Isabelle's last words and presently left the room.

CHAPTER IV.

The next morning Miss Bellmont went to see Nora, taking a small bundle of sewing she had been doing herself for some poor children.

She found the usually light-hearted Nora wearing a discouraged look and her eyes showed traces of tears.

"Good morning, Nora, are you ill?" was Miss Bellmont's greeting.

"No 'm, thank you," said Nora. "I'm only a bit worried. Lonnie hasn't bin feelin' well an' I'm always nervous over him," answered Nora. Then seeing the sewing she continued eagerly, "Oh, an' you've brought me work. I'm that thankful to you. I don't like botherin' Pat for ivery little want."

"You don't look able to sew, Nora," said Miss Bellmont, surveying Nora critically. "You had best let me take it back. I can lend you what you need and you can sew when you are stronger."

"Oh, indade, ma'am, I'm perfectly strong," said Nora hastily. "I'm not the great elephant I was when I was at Bellmont's that time, but I'm stout as I've bin for several years."

Miss Bellmont felt that Nora was hiding something serious behind the cheerfulness she had assumed at her entrance, but since she did not choose to have her trouble, if she had one, known Miss Bellmont did not feel free to force her confidence, so after promising to bring her more sewing if she was able to do it and giving Lonnie some pennies for sweets she departed, requesting Nora not to hurry with the sewing.

The simple truth was Pat had been drinking almost ever since the bank failure over a month ago. Nora had borne her own disappointment in silence and done all she could to

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

console her husband and stimulate him to fresh efforts, reminding him of the short time it had taken them to save what they had lost, and insisting that there was no reason why they could not do as well again.

But sympathy was thrown away on Pat O'Rien after he had taken his first drink. His wife's cheerfulness only angered him and he went on drinking harder than ever, growing ill and abusive to his family, even refusing Nora money when she ventured to ask him for it, which was not often, and only after she had wearied her brain trying to think of some way to manage without doing so. But Nora usually kept up her spirits and looked on the bright side. Surely her Pat would not go on this way long. He would come to himself and then all would be well again. She resolved to select a time when he was least under the influence of liquor and try to persuade him to give it up. She had avoided referring to his conduct heretofore, fearing to anger him or make him worse but thinking she had tried silence long enough decided to try a quiet talk with him about it. She would be very patient herself and no matter what Pat said she would keep her temper and not grow angry with him. So she had planned and had selected this very morning to have her talk. They were at the breakfast table and Pat was in a more reasonable mood than he had been for some time. Lonnie, a great, white fat baby of eighteen months, was still sleeping.

"I'm glad you've about quit drinking, Pat," Nora began. "You don't know how uneasy I was getting about you. Some men get so they can't quit you know and I was afraid you might too. Of course it was a bad loss, but it only makes it worse for you to drink up what you make now, and I do hope you won't any more. I can be satisfied to live here always if you'll just be my own Pat again. 'Tain't ownin' a nice house that makes a body happy I reckon."

Pat's face had grown dark as Nora proceeded, but she determined to at least finish what she had begun to say.

"I guess if you'd a worked fer that money as I did you

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

wouldn't feel quite so good over loosin' it and knowin' that thief of a cashier's flyin' around havin' a good time on it," retorted Pat crossly.

"I know you worked hard Pat, and it is aggravatin' to know how it went. but after all I'd rather be in our places than his. He took so much they'll be sure to find him, and I don't see how he can enjoy it anyway."

"Course not, women never can see nothin'," growled Pat.

"But if you'll only save what you make now Pat it will soon amount up again. I think I can get all the sewing I can do as long as I am able, but of course when another little one comes I won't be able to do much for a while. That's why I'm so anxious about you Pat. If you keep on you'll lose your place and then what will become of us all? Besides, think what the good book says about drunkards not going to heaven. Pat, it seems—

"An' what does it say about a brawlin' woman," interrupted Pat angrily. "Don't it say somethin' about a corner of the housetop an' a crust of bread bein' better than a plenty with a contentious woman?"

"I believe it does Pat. Be you thinkin' of tryin' it? You might induce the birds to give you up a corner and I might think to toss you a crust occasionally," retorted Nora, giving place to anger in spite of her resolve not to do so.

"I've heard folks say women made their men drunkards by quarrelin' with 'em when they was at home," observed Pat. "But I never believed it till now, and I reckon there is lots o' men drove to it jist that way."

"Maybe there is Pat," said Nora, now thoroughly aroused. "But did you ever notice how easy 'tis to drive a gang o' cattle the way they want to go? I've heard o' women too, bein' drove to the grave or insane asylum by drunken, stingy men, an' I'm beginning to know how to feel for them."

"'Course a woman'll always have the last word, an' I'd as well go," and Pat arose from the table and left the house.

Nora was hurt as well as angry, but she was too proud to let Pat see it, and had forced back the tears until he was

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

gone, when she sat down by the still sleeping child and let them flow.

“Oh Lonnie, if papa keeps on what will become of us! How will it all end?”

It were well Nora could not see how it would end.

A wise Father kindly holds a veil before us all, shutting out the future with its pains and griefs else we should be crushed with anticipation of them before the actual burdens were placed upon us.

Nora was vexed with herself too. She had shown herself so weak and hasty when she had meant to be so calm and self-possessed.

Lonnie waked shortly, and she busied herself caring for him and finishing the morning's work which was scarcely done, when Miss Bellmont came and Nora was more than pleased at the prospect of earning the money for her own necessities. She could do with such a little. Surely she could earn that little. Then she would not be obliged to ask Pat for it. She resolved too that hereafter she would not remonstrate or complain no matter what came. Pat should never have the least cause to say again that she was quarrelsome or contentious. She would bear her own burdens in silence and support herself and her child as long as she could. When she could not—well Nora tried to stop thinking there. Surely some change would take place. Something must happen to arouse Pat from the life he was living.

She finished the sewing Miss Bellmont left and when that lady called for it she brought more and told Nora she could furnish her with all she could do.

Before another month passed Pat had lost his position. He had been warned several times and his employer would not have borne with him so long had he not have been an excellent workman.

This was not unexpected by Nora, though she had tried to think he would surely stop before it came to that. Still if he had no money to buy liquor with perhaps he would sober up and in time get his place back or some other as good.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

But Nora had not the faintest idea to what depths of degradation Pat had sunk within the last few weeks nor to what base acts his craving for drink could lead him.

She was greatly surprised then one day when he rudely demanded one dollar of her. But she replied composedly:

"I suppose you want it to help pay the rent Pat, as it's about due. I can spare it this month, but I'm afraid I can't next," and Nora looked questioningly at her husband.

"Give it here then and don't stand starin' like a fool," said Pat, and Nora handed him the money. She had hoped he would say what he wanted it for. She could not think he would take the money she had earned and spend it for drink, but he had done so many things lately she had thought him incapable of that she scarcely knew what to expect next. One thing, however, she decided upon, and that was if Pat did come home drunk that dollar would be the last she would ever give him, and Nora's full red lips straightened into a determined line as she reached this conclusion. If Isabelle Bellmont could have seen her then she would have said that Nora was in one of her stubborn moods and all arguments were useless.

Pat did come home drunk, or drinking, but in a conciliatory mood; perhaps a little ashamed of his conduct. Just enough so to make him crosser with every one with whom he came in contact. He wished he had never taken that first drink. He wouldn't have done so, only the boys were all taking a drink after they heard of the bank failure that morning, and to them it had only meant a glass of rum. A sort of social cup of consolation, but to him it meant—Ah, what had it not meant? But he couldn't help it now, he argued, he supposed he would sober up some time. He always had, but in the meantime he must have his rum some way, and since Nora was his wife was not her money his too? Any way she must give it to him until he could sober up. Then he would make it all back to her and once he got free of liquor again he would never taste it as long as he lived; but now he was an abject slave to Strong Drink, in his master's fearful grasp and must do his bidding to the letter.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"You see, Nora, 'twasn't enough to pay the rent and so 'twasn't worth while savin' it," he said.

"Didn't you know it wasn't enough when you took it Pat?" asked Nora. "The rent will be due in a week and I haven't enough to pay it; besides I need all I make so bad."

"Yes, there 'tis, always complainin'," and Pat flung himself from the room, overturning a chair or two in his progress and so frightening Lonnie that he ran to Nora screaming.

Pat returned, threatening to beat him to death if he did not hush at once. Nora soothed the child as best she could, making no reply to her husband, though she was pale with anger and trembling from head to foot. Mistaking this as signs of fear Pat said roughly:

"You'd jist as well give me the rest o' that money as they ain't enough to pay the rent. Seems to me the grub 's gettin' kind o' thin, an' I'll git a supply while I'm out."

"No," said Nora quietly but firmly. "I can't spare any more Pat, and if you want more to eat you'll have to buy it. I'm doing all I can."

"Oh, you are," replied Pat scornfully. "And you can't spare any more money. Well then we'll see if there ain't somethin' ye can spare." And he glanced searchingly around the room while Nora's heart stood still with dread. "A feller has ter have suthin' ter eat an' drink I reckon. Yes, this'll do," and he picked up a tiny marble clock from the mantle.

"Oh, Pat, surely you're not going to sell the clock. Mr. Bellmont gave us that for a wedding present."

"Give me the money then," said he.

"No, I can't," replied Nora resolutely.

"Then the clock goes," and he marched from the house with it tucked under his arm.

Nora felt unusually despondent when he had gone; she missed the ticking of the little clock. Lonnie had sobbed himself to sleep and the house seemed strangely quiet. Little had she thought on the happy day when the clock came into her possession it would leave her thus! She glanced

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

about the room at the different articles of furniture, wondering what would go next, for Nora was still resolved not to give Pat money. She felt that in doing so she would be responsible for his drinking and piece by piece she saw her furniture taken from the house and sold, but she said not a word until one day a man came saying he had bought her sewing machine of Mr. O'Rein.

Now Nora had bought the machine when they first went to housekeeping with her own savings and felt that it, at least was hers; besides how could she sew without it?

"Why, I don't want to sell my machine," she said after she had recovered somewhat from the shock the news gave her. "Mr. O'Rein was mistaken in supposing I did."

"Wall, now, I'm sorry ma'am," replied the man politely. "But he told me you was fixin' to move an' was sellin' your things cheap an' that you had a first-class sewin' machine what had only bin in use two years an' he sold it to me this mornin' fer five dollars."

"You paid him for it?" faltered Nora.

"Yes ma'am," replied he with a pitying look. "I'm sorry 'taint all right an' if you can pay me the money back I won't take the machine."

"I can't do that," said Nora. "You'll have to take it."

"It'll make me feel like a thief," said the man. "An' if I didn't have sich a hard time a makin' a livin' I'd not tech it, but my wife's needed one so long an' I've never bin able to git it. I thought this a good chance. Tell ye what though, if you can pay me the five dollars in a month ye can have it back."

"Well, I'll see; and I thank you for the kindness anyway," said Nora, though she had little hopes of ever seeing her machine again.

"Oh. that's nothin', I allers like to live an' let live," replied the man as he drove away.

It was with a weary sigh that Nora resumed her sewing. She must at least finish what she had begun and must work faster and later at night in order to have it ready by the time it was promised. She had never thought the world

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

could look so dark. She was tempted to take Lonnie in her arms and slip into the river some night and end it all.

But no, that would not be the end. There was all eternity to come after, though surely it could not be worse than this, even for a murderer.

The temptation, though terrible, passed from her and she prepared her child's supper and dressed him for bed.

"Why not 'oo eat mamma?" lisped Lonnie.

"Mamma can't eat, darling," said Nora who felt that one mouthful would choke her.

"Oo sick?" questioned the child wonderingly.

"No, mamma isn't hungry. Mamma'll eat after a while. Come now and mamma will rock and sing."

Why did she hold him closer than usual and dread to put him out of her arms even after he was asleep?

She tried to think it was because she had thought for a moment of ending his innocent life. So she hugged him closer and rocked him until she felt forced to put him out of her arms to take up her work.

It was growing late and Pat had not come for his supper but Nora was not disappointed at this. He was seldom regular at meals, sometimes not coming at all. Nora tried to keep her mind on her work and to decide what things she could best do without, for since she could not do the work by hand, she had meant to do, she must manage with fewer of the necessaries of life. But a strange sense of loneliness and desolation crept over her as one by one the lights in the adjoining houses went out and the noise in the streets subsided. She walked to the window occasionally and peered anxiously out into the darkness. Would Pat never come? She could never rest until he was at home, though she always dreaded his coming.

She had no way of knowing the exact time but thought by the death-like stillness it must be near midnight, and a fear amounting almost to terror filled her heart, yet what was there to harm her? She had often been alone as late as this and felt not the slightest fear. It must be only because the rooms looked bare and cheerless since the departure of

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

so many of their furnishings, and reasoning thus Nora again sat resolutely down and took up her sewing, singing softly an old church song or two to keep up her courage. The songs recalled many comforting passages of scripture. Promises of God's watchfulness and His care for those in distress. Why had she feared and doubted? Did not God know all things? Could one hair of her head be harmed unless He saw best? Then she slowly repeated the twenty-third Psalm, lingering longer over the words: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death; I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me."

Nora's fears left her and she felt unusually happy.

It is only those who have been forced to drink the cup of grief and bitterness to its very dregs that are able in any measure to understand the Saviour's sufferings and to these few it is given to live happily amid any and all surroundings and thus being lifted above the petty trials of life, they take up the heavier crosses and bear them bravely to the end or fall under them as the case may be.

And so Nora wondered now that she could ever have felt the loss of her worldly possessions so keenly. Had she not many greater riches left that could not be taken from her? A kind Father who knew all her wants and would give her what was best while she lived and who, when she died, would take her to the heavenly home all ready prepared. If Pat continued to drink she had no right to complain. She knew his weakness when she married him. True he had promised to quit and she knew he had meant to keep his promise. Had kept it for a long time, then in an unguarded moment had taken the first glass. After that he was no longer his own master. He could no more control himself than he could control the winds of heaven. It was no longer her Pat with whom she lived, but a slave to strong drink who must obey the mandates of his master until he either succeeded in breaking his chains or was dragged by them to a drunkard's grave.

No, she would no longer blame Pat. He could not help doing as he did and she freely forgave him all the misery he

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

had caused her. Of course she could never love him again. That was quite another thing. True love must be founded on respect and she could not respect a man who was not his own master, sufficiently at least, to control his own appetites.

Yet, he had a soul to save, or loose, and it was about this that Nora was now most concerned. She would be very patient and dutiful, for after all he was her husband. The father of her child, or children—for Nora was within three months of her second confinement—and to a certain extent their interests must be one though love lay a corpse between them.

Scarcely had she reached this conclusion when she heard a heavy halting step at the door. She knew it must be Pat and tried hard to keep her heart from sinking as she realized from his walk that he was drunker than usual. Hastily opening the door she stepped out to assist him into the room should it prove needful. But Pat pushed her rudely aside, saying with an oath:

“Think I can’t get in? Well I can.” And though his gait was very unsteady he walked into the room.

“Now sit here and I’ll re-heat the coffee,” said Nora, placing him a chair.

“I hain’t come fer coffee,” growled Pat, placing his hand on the chair to steady himself. “And I hain’t time to set; I’ve come fer that money an’ I’m goin’ to have it too; so you’d jist as well hand it over an’ save trouble.”

“I can’t give you the money, Pat,” replied Nora steadily. “I need every cent I can make now, besides I can’t bear to have my money go for liquor when it hurts you so.”

Pat glared wildly at her a moment as though scarcely comprehending her words. He understood enough, however, to realize that she had refused him the money, and he poured out such a volley of oaths and curses as Nora had never heard before, ending with:

“So ye won’t, won’t ye? Well, we’ll see,” and Pat picked up the chair he had been leaning upon and took a step to-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ward his wife. "Now hand it over or you'll never have a chance to refuse me agin'."

Nora turned a shade paler but still remained firm. She had no idea Pat would really harm her. He only meant to frighten her into giving him the money. Of course he would not carry out his threat. Pat was incapable of such an act. Nora did not realize as well as she had thought, that this was no longer Pat with whom she had to deal, but a raging demon no more responsible for his actions than the veriest madman.

"No, Pat, I can't give you the money now. Put down the stool and let me fix your supper. We'll see about the money tomorrow."

Before she had quite finished speaking, Pat rushed toward her with the stool and with one blow struck her to the floor.

"Oh, Pat, don't strike me again and I'll give you the money," begged Nora, who was still conscious. Her face was bleeding from a slight wound, but the main force of the blow had fallen on her shoulder.

But Pat heeded not the pitiful request. The sight of his wife's blood seemed to affect him as a wild beast and he dealt blow on blow even after life must have been extinct.

His child was awakened by the noise and was calling for his mother but Pat heard him not. He had eyes and thoughts for nothing but the bruised and bleeding form on the floor and stood like a statue, gazing upon it as though unable to move or turn his eyes.

Slowly his reason was returning. Why was Nora lying there like that and why, Oh why, was he standing over her with that heavy stool? He dropped it with a shudder as he saw blood and a portion of Nora's fair hair clinging to it.

A loud knock at the door failed to attract his attention and a second had no better success so the door was pushed open and a neighbor walked into the room followed by two policemen.

It was useless to ask questions. Pat's position over the dead body and the stool lying at his feet was strong evi-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

dence. Then the neighbor had heard the loud words and the blows and there was no one to give them but Pat.

"I didn't think it 'd be this bad though, or I wouldn't 'ave waited to call you," he said to the policemen. "He's been racketin' around a long time, an' I thought if he was took up once mebber he'd behave hisself. I never thought he'd hurt Nory."

Requesting the neighbor to guard one door one policeman stepped to the other while the second approached Pat revolver in hand.

But in this case all such precautions were unnecessary for Pat made not the slightest resistance and only stared stupidly at the officer as he deftly slipped the handcuffs on him and said:

"Now, my man, you must come with me."

"What'll you do with the child?" asked the other officer, for Lonnie was still crying and calling his mamma.

"We'll take him a day or two," said the man. "I'll go and tell my wife and call in a neighbor or two. It's dreadful, an' Pat thought the world o' Nory till he took to drinkin'."

The officers waited until he returned and then departed with their prisoner.

Persons in the immediate vicinity of the crime were greatly horrified.

Pat O'Rien ought to be lynched.

Ordinary hanging was too good for such a brute.

And the man who had sold Pat the liquor when he heard of the crime took his cigar from between his teeth and coolly remarked:

"Well, it's bad. That Pat O'Rien hadn't a bit o' sense when he was drinkin'. I've had trouble with him more than once, but he was a good customer. Owed me three dollars though I don't reckon I'll ever get. He'd gone home that night after it 'cause I wouldn't let him have anything else till he paid up. Reckon he'll hang," and the cigar was resumed as unconcernedly as though he had been in no way responsible for the crime.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

But is he not responsible? If you, my friend, should provide some one the means to destroy himself or his neighbor, would you not be responsible for the crime? And if so, then when this liquor dealer sold Pat that which he knew made him quarrelsome and dangerous, was he not responsible for his crime?

And where, indeed, does this chain of awful responsibility end? Does it not even reach to the makers and executors of our laws? And while saloon-keepers today are sending from their doors many criminals, to prey upon the innocent and unsuspecting, and starting many more of their fellow mortals on the road to eternal doom, are they not laying their coats at the feet of a Christian nation while they carry on their hideous work?

Oh! but these low saloon-keepers.

They are not considered anybody.

They are not recognized in social and church circles at all.

Are they not? But what of the brewer and wholesaler; are they debarred from the church and ostracized socially? Certainly not. Yet were it not for them the "low" saloon-keeper or retailer would be an impossibility.

Pat himself remembered nothing of the crime, though he did not doubt having committed it. He remembered starting for the money and Nora's refusing to give it to him. Then all was a blank until he began gradually to come to himself beside her dead body. When told why he was arrested he seemed stunned and refused to talk to anyone and when his mind became entirely clear he was almost crazed with grief, and remorse, pacing his cell when alone, moaning and begging Nora to forgive him.

"Did I kill you Nora, as they say? Do you know how sorry I am? I'll never see you any more, Nora, and I deserve it all for I didn't treat you right. I remember that, but O, I can't believe I killed you. It's too awful. And poor Lonnie, what will become of him? No, I don't want to see him. He looks like Nora."

But to all visitors Pat remained sullen and silent, refusing

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

to answer questions or to speak of his crime in any way—and in due time he was tried, found guilty, and executed. Then in a few days the whole affair was forgotten.

Busy humanity has no time to look beneath the surface and discover the causes of crime and remove them, but contents itself with punishing the criminals as they come to light.

But many murders and other crimes are committed that are not caused by drunkenness.

Granted. It is because there is more than enough crime and poverty in the world without that caused by the liquor traffic, that we would abolish it. It should be the desire of every true citizen to lessen crime as much as possible and how better can this be begun than by striking a business that makes so many criminals?

Miss Bellmont saw Nora buried decently and sent Lonnie to a sister of his mother in the East and then went about her work more grim and silent than ever.

“Well, it’s nothing more than I expected,” said Isabelle when the manner of poor Nora’s death was told her by William. “I told you what was the matter when you said Nora wanted work and you see now I was right.”

“Which seems to afford you much satisfaction,” William had replied dryly, though he was surprised at his wife’s want of feeling. He knew she had loved Nora the four years she had been her maid. Then why this seeming indifference at her terrible death?

William was beginning to have a suspicion—a dark and terrible suspicion. One that he flung from him with all his strength when ever it arose. And Miss Bellmont was frequently surprised by his changing moods. Now he would sit by the hour lost in gloomy thought, seemingly oblivious to his surroundings, then he would be gay and sarcastic by turns until the good woman was almost at her wits’ end trying to analyze and understand him.

CHAPTER V.

The next week after the fair there was a political meeting at Rosedale. The speaker was a prominent factor in his party's affairs, and had frequently held important offices. The people of Rosedale felt quite elated at having secured an hour or two of his valuable time. To be sure the opposing party's leaders had told some very unsavory tales about him, but tales told about an active politician in the heat of a campaign are to be taken like gossip at an afternoon tea, with considerable salt. So the people understand and prepare to listen to him with as unprejudiced minds as it is possible for ordinary mortals to have during a free American political campaign.

The speaking was to be in the shade of two or three large trees near the center of the town, where there was at that time several vacant lots, and the crowd began to assemble as early as 2 o'clock, although the speaking was not to begin until 3. The place selected for the meeting was only a short distance from Mr. Bunn's saloon, and that gentleman was greatly rejoiced to know he had this advantage over his competitor. It would give him some chance to get even with him for making so much fair week.

Finally, after the delays always to be expected on such occasions, the speaker mounted the stand and began his address, waxing warm and loud as he proceeded.

A few boys and young men collected on the outer edge of the crowd, who had been patronizing Mr. Bunn, with a view no doubt to stimulating their patriotism and enabling them to more fully understand the speaker. And evidently it had done so, as they were doing most of the cheering, growing louder and more noisy, greatly annoying the persons standing near them.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

One young man in particular, seemed resolved to show his patriotism, for his shouts and hurrahs could be heard above all the others.

"I say, Tom, don't you reckon we could kind o' quiet those boys a little, or get 'em away?" It was John Reynolds who spoke.

"Oh, we might," replied Tom, carelessly, "but I don't see as we've got any call to trouble ourselves. That chap furnished the stuff them boys has been a drinkin' an' he can enjoy their pranks fer all me."

"But the people can't hear," persisted John.

"They ain't a missin' much," was the cool reply.

John glanced at Tom, sharply. He had had cause to wonder at his actions and words many times lately. Of course, he expected him to be changed, for Tom had carried out his intention of becoming a Christian and was now a member of the little church at Rosedale, but this, in John's estimation, did not account for his strange behavior.

"Tom, what's the matter with you, any way? You used to take a lot of interest in the campaigns and enjoy 'em, but I've noticed this year you don't seem to care a cent which way the thing goes."

"Well, John, I'm beginnin' to see that my party, or the men runnin' it, can sin a little, as well as the next one. Think of a man as high up as that one is goin' into a saloon and leavin' money to treat with, or buy votes with. If it takes whisky, give 'em whisky; if they want money, give 'em money. Seems to me a purty rotten way o' runnin' the government."

"But most public men do so, more or less. You know I don't believe in it, and that's why I wouldn't run for constable last spring. I knew I'd have to treat some o' the boys if I was elected. No, I don't go in for politics myself much, but that's what it takes to get some men's votes, and if our party don't get them the other one will."

"So, if the other party uses underhand ways to get votes our party must too, and the one that can buy the most votes

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

beats. Well, I'm gettin' to think that's about the size of it," said Tom.

Here the loud-talking young man left the crowd and crossed the street to Mr. Bunn's saloon; the other boys grew quieter, and John began to think the disturbance was over. Presently, however, a loud commotion was heard in the direction of Mr. Bunn's.

"Somebody's got too much o' the speaker's treat I reckon," observed Tom Long. "I'm goin' over to see who 'tis. That little pen runs down past Jack's restaurant and the trouble's in the pen."

The pen referred to was simply a narrow alley, fenced closely with high boards. It had been constructed by Mr. Bunn to accommodate that portion of his customers who disliked being seen entering or leaving a saloon, and by the aid of this alley these over-sensitive gentlemen might walk boldly in at the front door of Jack's restaurant, out at the back, and into Mr. Bunn's without anyone being the wiser, except Jack himself, and it was in this alley, as Tom Long said, that the disturbance seemed to be.

Tom sauntered across the street as he spoke, and entered Jack's restaurant. He found Jack standing at the back door looking out. Tom looked over his shoulder and saw the young man who had just left the crowd lying on the ground, his face covered with blood.

"What's the row about, Jack?" asked Tom.

"Don't know," was the reply. "I was busy in the front room when I heard some tall cussin' over at Bunn's, but didn't think nothin' of it till I heard the back door open an' Stubbs a swearin' at somebody, and got back here in time to see Stubbs chuck him out an' slam the door. He ain't hurt much; Stubbs only used knuckles. He's bled some but'll be all right directly—I'm goin' to lock this door 'cause everybody'll be crowdin' in here in a minute." And Jack locked the door and pocketed the key.

"Where's Bunn?" asked Tom.

"Over to the speakin'. Yonder he comes now. My! Won't he be disgraced though?" And Jack gave a chuckle.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

of delight as he pictured Mr. Bunn's chagrin, for that gentleman had always prided himself on running his business without such disturbances.

"He can't expect nothin' else. I never knowed any body to keep saloon long without havin' trouble. It's the business that's wrong an' the man can't help it."

"But you couldn't think o' makin' Bunn see it that way. He says the business is all right if it's run right."

Mr. Bunn hurried into his saloon and made a few hasty inquiries then opened the back door and looked at the boy who was trying to get up, after which he came into Jack's room, where quite a crowd had gathered.

"You see, gentlemen," he explained, "it was all his own fault. Stubbs had to do it. He'd had his share, but when Mr. Stubbs told him he got mad and raised a racket an' Stubbs jist put him out in the pen to sober up. He ain't hurt much and is comin' 'round, an' will likely have better manners. I hate to have such musses 'round my place o' business an' don't often."

"No! An' when you do it's always the fault o' some brutish cuss or other that's always scrapin' anyhow. Stubbs, now, wouldn't hurt a flea only in self defence. I can swear to that an' show a mark to prove it," observed Jack, dryly.

"Well, Jack, Stubbs was drinkin' that mornin' you was in an' I don't think you ought to lay it up agin him," said Mr. Bunn.

"I won't," said Jack. "And if sometime when I'm drinkin' I take a notion to get even you mustn't lay it up agin me."

Tom rejoined John at the speaking and scarcely had he done so when the drunken young man emerged from Bunn's, and led by a friend made his way toward the crowd. He was coatless and hatless and the blood had only been partly washed from his face and was plentifully sprinkled over his light shirt; a red handkerchief covered one eye: but not in the least daunted by his personal appearance the young man pushed himself nearer the speaker despite his

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

friend's efforts to restrain him. Through it all he had not forgotten his patriotism and kept hurrahing for his favorite candidate.

"You're right, pard. You're right," he sang out, as the speaker made a lucky hit, and the crowd cheered.

But the speaker remained as undisturbed as though drunken men with blood bespattered faces and clothes were a part of the program. He seems alarmed least something has happened or is going to happen to the currency of the country and is very anxious to impress upon his hearers the importance of having good money. Why is he not also anxious to have good men? But no: just any kind of men will do. The more ignorant and vicious the easier bought or influenced. Brink them in from every land: criminals, paupers and anarchists; fill them full of somebody's best old rye and trot them off to the polls. Then when anything goes wrong we lay the blame on the money, the other party or anything else. but the kind of men; but "The man's the goud for a' that."

After the speaking John and Tom walked toward home together, the latter being unusually silent.

"Well, we had a good speaking," observed John, presently. "If them boys hadn't a' cut up so. It looked bad in 'em."

"It looked a good deal worse fer that feller to furnish 'em the stuff that made 'em cut up," replied Tom, shortly.

"Tom, I'm thinkin' you're a right smart of a crank lately," said John, impatiently.

"Well, think away then; but you know tain't right as well as I do, unless you're so wrapped up in your party you can't see nothin' an' I always gave you credit for more sense than that," replied Tom.

"My party, Tom? 'Twas always our party before."

"Well, I reckon 'tis yet, only I can see a little an' it seems you can't," replied Tom. "I say tain't right for a candidate to do as that one did today, an' I don't care whose party he belongs to. The whole bloomin' business is a piece o' dirt,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

an' I can't see how any self-respectin' person can patronize it or hold up for it."

"I don't patronize it. I know it's a bad business an' I don't hold up for it, but there ain't no way o' stoppin' it as I can see, except to teach the boys to let it alone."

"An' a fine chance you stand 'o teachin' 'em better when a man like that speaker drinks it hisself an' furnishes it fer them! They think he's great guns. School was let out so the children could all hear him. Seems to me, John, that's a kind of a 'round about way of goin' at it, an' while you're tryin' to teach a few boys—maybe really do teach a few—not to be caught in any of the traps set for 'em, there's any amount of 'em walkin' right into danger with their eyes shut."

"Well, I don't see any way to stop it," replied John. "The saloons are here it seems; a legal institution and if boys can't be taught to stay away from 'em, I don't see how they're to be saved from 'em."

"Now, look here, John: look at this thing from the boy's point o' view. He sees these places all over the country: one or two in most every little town and in cities accordin', and he sees men, he's been taught to look up to, patronizin' 'em. What is he to think? Specially if he's never been taught the dangers o' the places? or that it's wrong to patronize 'em? an' if he has he's likely to get so muddled tryin' to straighten it all out an' make his bringin' up fit in with facts that he won't know what to think, and is apt to conclude that if this or that man drinks it must be all right after all. Then, when you look at it from the liquor dealer's point of view and understand that he's in business to make money, and is goin' to do all he can to build up his trade, you can begin to see the boys' danger. I've knowed 'em to be enticed into saloons an' treated and made much of till they had such a taste fer liquor they couldn't let it alone. That's only one of their ways to build up trade: make the boys slaves to it while they're boys and they can generally depend on gettin' about all they make when they get to be men."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“But I can’t believe all the liquor dealers set down an’ deliberately plan to ruin boys and men like that,” said John.

“Maybe they don’t set down and plan it all out, but they’d just as well. The results are the same. An’ I’ve knowed men mean enough to do just that. A saloon keeper, I take it, ain’t troubled with much of a conscience to start on, nor no very great crop o’ morals, and I never knowed one to stay in the business a year without goin’ down hill morally. So you can see how easy ’tis for them to get so far along they don’t care what they do so they don’t get caught. The business is as bad morally for the liquor dealers as for his customers. While he’s runnin’ and degradin’ others he’s doin’ the same for himself.”

“Yes, it’s bad take it all around: for you never know who’s going to begin drinkin’ next, and there ought to be some way to stop it, but it seems nobody can find the way.”

“Seems to me we found a way to stop ’em catchin’ and makin’ nigger slaves,” said Tom.

“That was different,” persisted John. “Every person that drinks don’t become a slave to it. Besides think o’ the people that makes a livin’ out o’ the business, to say nothin’ o’ what’s paid to the government by it. I tell you it’s foolish to think o’ tryin’ to stop sich a powerful business.”

“And I tell you it’s cowardly to let it alone,” retorted Tom, angrily. “And I’m ashamed of you, John Reynolds. I never thought to hear such words from your lips. What if some people does make money out o’ the liquor trade; ain’t lots o’ others ruined and sent to the devil by it? Didn’t the South make money out o’ nigger slaves? But they had to give ’em up just the same. And the government— well now I never thought o’ that before,” he continued, more slowly.

“Yes, there, now! What a bloomin’ mess we made of it when we stopped the slave trade. If we’d only ’ave had the interests of the government at heart now, instead o’ the in-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

terest of a few ignorant niggers an' instead o' stoppin' the whole thing as we did, just 'a' said to the catchers an' traders: 'Here, this thing don't look just right to us, an' if you fellers keep it up you've got to pay the government so much for the privilege. What a golden stream might 'ave been flowin' into the treasury yet from the slave trade!'"

"But the liquor trade can't be stopped like the slave trade was," replied John. "An' all we can do is to kind o' regulate it an' keep it from gettin' worse and pray for the Lord to show the liquor dealers the error o' their ways."

"Pray for 'em! Well, of course, we ought to pray for 'em, but I reckon if we'd 'a' done nothin' but stand an' pray for the slave catchers we'd 'a' been a prayin' yet an' they'd a' been goin' on with the business. An' you're goin' to regulate the liquor trade, too. Well, go ahead. Meanwhile I'll regulate the next earthquake or cyclone that comes along. An' you're goin' to keep it from getting worse. It's ruinin' men now, soul an' body, an' causin' enough misery to sink the whole country—say, John, how much worse could it get?"

"Well, what are you goin' to do about it? It's the silliest thing ever I heard, this claimin' a law or two could stop the whole thing. We've got more liquor laws now than we can enforce."

"Soothin' syrup, every bloomin' one of 'em. Made to kind o' pacify an' sooth people into thinkin' they're gettin' rid o' the liquor business whereas it's only bein' consolidated same as other trades. No, sir, if we want to kill the liquor trade we've got to wake up an' quit takin' soothin' syrup. And I'm not claimin' a few laws 'll stop it, either. All the laws from the commandments down ain't stopped murderin', lyin' an' stealin'. Think we ought n't to have the laws? Well, that's all we can do with the liquor trade; make it a crime legally; it's already one morally, and then punish the criminals."

Tom had reached his store by this time and John walked on without replying, a dissatisfied pucker on his usually placid brow.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Don’t see what’s comin’ over Tom,” he mused. “I always thought religion ’d hit him hard, but I never thought ’twould make a plum fanatic of him. Of course, ’tis a bad business, but we don’t have as much drinkin’ as we used to, and I don’t see how two saloons can make much here.”

Here John reached his shop and lost his troubled thoughts in work.

CHAPTER VI.

Though Mr. Bunn had most of the trade the day of the speaking it did not follow that he had made the most money, and if honest John Reynolds could have known all that took place at McGregor's that day he would have known how one saloon keeper at least made money.

Among McGregor's many other natural graces and acquirements was that of stinginess, as has been before hinted. He had persuaded his clerk, Smith, by name, that he could afford to work for him for almost nothing because he would be learning the trade. And to tell the truth Smith could not have chosen a better teacher of the trade than was McGregor. If he had any heart at all it had become so hardened that nothing affected it. He could take the last cent a customer had if he knew his children were starving and laugh at or curse the child that came for him.

If one came that was such an habitual drinker that one or two glasses did not make him drunk and for any reason McGregor wanted him drunk he kept a preparation he dropped in his liquor before passing it to him, and his customer would afterward wonder what was the matter with him, and, if on examination, he found his pocket-book considerably lighter than he had supposed it to be, his wonder was increased unless indeed it happened to be one who had been there before: then he would understand.

Occasionally one would hear tales of men being drugged and robbed at McGregor's, but most persons supposed this only a drunkard's excuse or way of accounting for the money he had doubtless drank up or gambled away; and, anyway, if they are believed they elicit no sympathy for the person. They should stay away from such places you know.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

It was late on the afternoon of the speaking that Carl Newman went to McGregor's accompanied by a friend. Said friend being a gold miner who had recently struck it rich and had come to town to enjoy himself and blow in a portion of his newly acquired wealth. Coming across Carl on the street he had invited him to go to McGregor's for a friendly game of cards. Carl went: he was always ready to play whether a friendly game or otherwise.

"Here, old boy, give us something tip-top. Come on, Carl, we can play better for having something to drink," said the miner, whose name was Jones. "What'll it be since you've quit the stronger stuff? Soda, sweet cider er what?"

"We've got some good beer here that won't hurt nobody," said Smith.

"Well, I'll risk the beer, I guess," said Carl Newman, and after drinking to each other's luck, both men seated themselves at the table where Smith had placed the cards.

After several games had been played with varied success Jones brought his fist down on the table with an oath, adding:

"I say, Newman, it ain't no fun playin' this way; let's just bet enough to make it interestin', say a ten or so."

"All right," was the reply, and both players passed a bill to Smith.

Now, Jones, like many persons who have just come into the possession of riches, rather enjoyed making a display of them, and when he opened his pocket-book to take out the bill he spread it out upon the table, thereby disclosing to view numerous bills and pieces of gold: enough to arouse McGregor's avarice, and he straightway set his active brain to work devising a plan whereby he hoped to secure the fattened purse himself.

A hasty whispered conversation took place behind the bar and a plan of action decided upon.

"There, that'll work, I think. Get him to play with you; let him beat you and then propose the treat; I'll 'tend to the rest. I'll put Newman's beer part pure whisky, too;

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

then we'll see if he don't drink again, ha, ha." And McGregor gave a satisfied chuckle as he contemplated his hideous work.

"Who's beatin'?" asked Smith, coming up to table.

"You can give the money to Carl," said Jones.

"It's no use you playin' with Carl," said Smith. "I've never seen him beat yet when he was tryin'. I believe you an' me'd be about even now, an' when you git tired losin' money with Carl, I'll play you a few."

"All right, but I'll risk another with Carl. I'm generally purty lucky."

But Carl won that game and two others before Jones gave it up, and Smith took Carl's place at the table. It was growing dark and the lamps were lighted before Smith and Jones began to play.

"Bring us a drink of somethin', Mack," said Smith. "As Mr. Jones says, I think we can play better if we start in with a drink."

"Well, here you are then," said McGregor, placing two glasses on the table, one at Smith's right hand and one at Jones'; then turning to Carl he said:

"We won't be left out, Mr. Newman. We'll have a sup or two ourselves if we ain't playin'. Here's your beer an' it's Smith's treat if he beats, and Jones' if he don't. Here's to their luck." And McGregor drank his own liquor with a gulp.

Carl hesitated a moment. Ought he to risk even a second glass of beer? Reason answered no, but why not? There isn't much alcohol in beer. Where's any danger in a glass or two of beer? And he took the glass from the table and drank it off.

Smith and Jones played several games and Jones won all but one. Jones began to rub his eyes and look sleepy during the last game, and when it was finished declared he would play no more and arose to go. But his legs refused to support him and he caught at the table for support.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Look out, Mr. Jones," said Smith, coming to his assistance. "That whisky was likely a little strong."

"I ain't drunk; I know I ain't," declared Jones. "It takes more 'n two glass o' anything to make me drunk. I don't see what ails me."

"Mebbe you're a mite sick or tired, anyway you'd better lay down here on Smith's bed and rest a little," said McGregor.

Jones decided to do so since he could neither walk nor stand, and was already too much under the influence of the drug to think clearly. Needless to add he was soon entirely unconscious.

In the meantime Mr. Newman felt a strong desire for drink creeping over him. He turned once to leave. then thinking it would look cowardly to thus desert his friend he still lingered.

"What the deuce ails him, Mack?" he inquired, going to the bed where Jones lay. "I've seen him drink more'n that myself without gettin' drunk."

"How do I know what ails him?" replied McGregor, gruffly. "I wish you'd a' got him out o' here someway. He's likely piled up here now for the night." This was added with a view to throwing off Carl's suspicions if he had any, but he had none and was at a loss how to account for Jones' condition.

"Well, Mack, put me up a bottle o' something and I'll be goin'. I'll look in after while an' see how he's gettin' on," said Carl.

"Beer?" inquired McGregor.

"No. I'll take whisky. Reckon tain't worth while me tryin' to quit it. I've gone too far an' I'll just eat, drink an' be merry while I do live, whatever comes after." And Carl tried to smile though he felt a sickening fear and dread of what might be the result of this night's weakness. As before stated Carl had had several attacks of delirium-tremens; the last two or three being so acute that the physician had warned him that the next one would likely end his life.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

And Carl thought he had been very careful. He had refused all alcoholic drinks for several weeks until tonight, when he thought he might take a glass of beer without endangering himself and probably might have done so had not this agent of Satan, being prompted by his master, who doubtless feared that one of his many slaves was about to escape, spread the net that was forever to hold its victim in its fearful toils.

But Carl Newman should not have gone into temptation. He should have heeded the warning and avoided dangerous companions and places of amusements.

To be sure he should, but again we would remind the reader that it is not intention to picture humanity as it should be, but as it is when tempted and tried by our pernicious liquor traffic.

Mr. Jones did not wake until next morning: he sat up rubbing his eyes and trying to think what had befallen him.

‘Hello, pard, how do you feel?’ inquired McGregor.

‘‘Not very good. Was I here all night? Was I drunk?’’ asked Jones.

‘‘Guess you was a little. Anyway you couldn’t walk, so we just piled you up. Want another drink?’’

‘‘No! Least ways not till I’ve had some breakfast.’’ And Jones started in quest of his breakfast and seeing the sign over Jack Winter’s restaurant he went there.

‘‘Morning stranger,’’ said Jack, cheerily. ‘‘Anything?’’

‘‘Yes, I want some breakfast,’’ was the not very definite reply.

‘‘Ham, eggs, oysters or what?’’

‘‘Some fried oysters an’ eggs an’ coffee’ll do, I reckon.’’

‘‘All right. You can go in the back room there an’ slick up a little while I’m fixin’ ’em if you’re a mind. I won’t be long.’’

Jones proceeded to slick up, which in this instance meant only a face bath and hair brush.

Not until he had eaten his breakfast did Jones bethink

him of his pocket-book. Then when he took it from his pocket to pay Jack it was empty.

"I've been robbed! I know I have! It couldn't a' fell out, I know it couldn't!" exclaimed Jones, examining every crevice of his purse in vain. "Every cent gone."

"Where did you spend the night, stranger?" asked Jack, rather inclined to look on Jones' proceedings as a ruse to get his breakfast free.

"Over at Mack's." And he gave Jack a history of the events of the preceding evening as far as he knew, then closing with:

"You see I must 'ave been robbed by some loafer while I was asleep. I'll go back an' tell Mack about it and maybe he can give me some idee who 'twas." And he crossed the street and hurried to McGregor's saloon.

Jack looked after him with a curious smile on his face.

"Yes, stranger, I've no kind o' doubt but Mack could give you a purty good idee who took yer money, but you'd jist as well look for it at the end o' the rainbow for all the good it'll do you. People don't as a rule find things they lose at Mack's. By gum! I'll have some fun out o' this," he concluded, smiling broadly.

Jones returned presently saying rather dejectedly:

"They don't know nothin' about it. There was a big crowd in last night an' 'course they couldn't watch everybody. Funny what made me sleep so deuced sound. There was over five hundred dollars in that pocket-book."

Jack gave a long whistle and then with that peculiar smile still on his face, said:

"I've heard tell o' men sleepin' sound at Mack's before. Must have uncommon good beds."

Jones looked thoughtful a moment as though trying to decide what Jack meant, then shaking his head as though to give it up, said:

"Newman, too, now, is in there this mornin' drinkin' fit to kill, an' yesterday he told me he had to quit; he did take a glass or two o' beer though, an' I reckon that started him."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Was Newman in there all the time you were till you went to sleep?” asked Jack.

“Yes. Went in to play as I told you and was just comin’ out when my legs begun to wobble so I couldn’t stand on ’em.”

“And Newman didn’t drink nothin’ but a couple o’ beers?”

“Not while I was awake. Course now a man’s apt to say he’s quit an’ then go at it agin, but Carl’s got to where he’s got to stop purty soon or pass in his checks. But I reckon he’s concluded to risk it another whirl.”

Again that strange knowing smile flitted across Jack’s face, but he said nothing and Jones took his leave, after offering Jack his watch as security for his debt.

“Oh, go ’long. I don’t keep a pawnbroker’s shop. You can pay me some time,” replied Jack.

Several customers came and went after Jones took his leave and it was not until nearly ten o’clock that Jack found himself free to have his anticipated fun. Then dropping a revolver in his pocket he proceeded to McGregor’s and walking up to the bar said:

“A glass o’ beer Mack please, and don’t bother to put it half whisky. I take my beer an’ whisky separate and can’t understand Newman’s taste.”

McGregor glanced at him suspiciously and knew at once by that cool quizzical look that Jack either knew or guessed more about his business methods than he cared to have him know, but he replied shortly:

“I don’t know nothin’ ’bout Newman’s tastes only they seem to be for whisky today; he’s jist gone; drunker’n hell.”

“Don’t know nothin’ ’bout his tastes? Well, that is good. How’d ye know then that he liked his beer an’ whisky mixed? An’ say, Mack, how did you come to be so generous? Whisky costs more’n beer an’ you must ’ave give Carl as much whisky as beer. I’ll swear your business methods puzzles me more an’ more. I’ve been tryin’ several years to understand ’em an’ can’t. Here, I’m ready

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

for my whisky now and you needn't mind doctorin' it neither; I'm not needin' a nap and ain't got enough tin or paper to pay you."

McGregor glared at him angrily and Jack broke into a loud laugh.

"Say, Mack, what made you so anxious 'bout that feller's health?"

"It's none o' your business what I do an' I don't see what the Dickens you're drivin' at," retorted McGregor.

Again Jack laughed.

"Oh, it ain't none o' my business ain't it? Well, I supposed 'twas; least ways when you clean your customers out so clean they can't pay for their breakfast an' I have to give it to 'em."

"Who says I cleaned anybody out? It's a damned lie," yelled McGregor, who was almost dancing with rage.

If looks or thoughts could have killed him, then Jack Winters would not have left that saloon alive. But McGregor's wrath only increased Jack's levity and he resumed without noticing the interruption, except with a smile:

"Over a half a thousand, too, Jones says 'twas; really now, Mack, I think you might divide up, long as I had to give him his breakfast."

"I hain't got nothing to divide up an' if you give 'im his breakfast it's your own loss," said McGregor.

"Or maybe now you had to go pards with Smith to get him to help you," suggested Jack, hoping to draw him into the argument.

But Smith refused to be drawn as he knew not how to reply to his tormenter; bethinking him, however, of how Bunn's clerk had silenced Jack, he glanced at the heavy bottle McGregor had left on the bar. But Jack's hawklike eye saw everything; past experience had taught him watchfulness and he only laughed when he saw Smith's glance rest on the bottle."

"Come, now, Smith, don't try to play Stubbs with me. I never get caught twice in the same trap; you'd only

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

break a glass or window and Mack'd make you pay for 'em." Jack rested his hand on his revolver as he spoke and Smith could plainly see its outline as it lay in his coat pocket.

"Give me another swig now, then I'll be goin' though it always most breaks my heart to leave sich lovin' companions."

"The same to you, pard," observed Smith.

Again Jack laughed.

"Now, Smith, don't try to be funny; tain't becomin' to everybody. I know you're tickled most to death to see me come an' no doubt weep bitter tears when I leave. All the same I'll have to be goin'. And, Mack, you can jist take this off of what you owe Jones."

"I don't owe Jones nothin'. Curse you, I wish you'd mind your own business," said McGregor.

"I do, and find plenty o' time to help you mind yours if you'd let me. So long, gentlemen. so long. If you didn't get Jones' money, Mack, I'm sorry, 'cause I'm dead broke an' am afraid I won't be able to pay you soon." And Jack vanished smiling through the door.

Now, a little fun acted upon Jack Winters very much as a little whisky did upon Carl Newman; it only whetted his appetite for more. and the liquor he had taken did not have a dulling tendency.

As he emerged from McGregor's he saw Mr. Bunn standing in the door of his saloon.

"There, now, Bunn's seen me and'll feel slighted if I don't give him a call. 'Pears to me I ain't been there since Stubbs introduced me to that beer bottle so unceremoniously. I'll jist go over to let 'em know I'm still alive an' hold a flush hand." A broad smile spread over Jack's face as he reached this conclusion and saw Bunn turn from the door and close it.

It vanished like magic. however, when he reached the door, which he opened with a kick, and revolver in hand walked in saying with an angry scowl:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Give ye jist half a minute to clear out o’ here, gentlemen; be quick; I’m goin’ to run this shebang myself awhile. Move lively now, an’ Stubbs don’t you dare to think of a beer bottle.”

Stubbs looked at Bunn and Bunn looked at Stubbs; both looked at Jack, but they saw no sign of a joke about his scowling face. An ominous click decided them to obey his orders.

“We better go, I reckon,” said Bunn, in a whisper. “He’s plum full o’ McGregor’s whisky an’ no tellin’ what he might do. It’s a strange thing to me why men will go to sich low——”

Mr. Bunn was interrupted by a push from Jack that landed him on the further side of the walk.

“Now, gentlemen, jist walk right in an’ have drinks all around,” said Jack, addressing a small crowd of loafers, who had noticed the disturbance, and came to see what it was about. “I won’t charge you a cent for the first drink. It’s a treat. I want you to taste my liquors for I’m certain if you’ll do that you’ll never go to Mack’s agin to git a drink. No respectable person goes there any more, an’ no wonder; he’s allers got a muss o’ some kind on his hands and fussin’ an’ fightin’ to beat the band. Now, I don’t have no sich doin’s. I keep things respectable and carry on my business in decency an’ in order, as the good book says it should be carried on; so come right in an’ see for yourselves.” And Jack re-entered the saloon followed by a few of the more jocularly inclined gentlemen of leisure. A few there were, however, who scented trouble and possibly a trip to court and they turned to go.

“Look here, gentlemen,” cried Bunn, who had carefully picked himself up from the walk, where Jack had deposited him. “Are you goin’ away and leave me this way? That outlandish feller’ll give all my best goods away or drink it hisself. Can’t some of you come an’ help me put him out?”

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

But the men thus appealed to had little or no love for Bunn and rather enjoyed his present predicament.

"No, thanks, Bunn. We don't care to get mixed up in an' argument with Jack today; looks to be a mite tipsy," said one.

"That's right. I don't feel any overpowerin' longing to face a gun today, specially if Jack's got a hold o' the handle," said another. "Let's be gettin' out o' here, fellers." And they walked away leaving Bunn and Stubbs standing irresolute, trying to decide upon some plan of action and wondering what would come next.

They were not kept long in suspense, for scarcely had the departing loafers disappeared around the corner when Jack emerged from the saloon followed by his companions.

"Well, gentlemen, how are you enjoyin' your vacation? Don't look like you hardly appreciated my kindness in leavin' my business to run itself an' comin' over here jist to give you a rest. But come, cheer up. I say, Stubbs, give us a song; nothing like music to liven a feller up and you both look like you needed cheerin' up. Hop right up here on this box an' give us a lively tune. Yankee Doodle'll do."

Stubbs was inclined to refuse at first but Jack leveled his revolver at him, saying:

"Be quick or you'll never have a chance to sing another song. I'll lay you as flat as you laid me with that beer bottle an' you may not git up so quick. Up with you now."

Thus admonished Stubbs mounted the box and began singing the designated song in a rather doleful way that by no means suited his tormenter, who said:

"Why, blast it, man, who ever heard Yankee Doodle sung in that funeral march way. You've got to sing it right afore you get down from there, an' you'd jist as well get at it."

Stubbs gave a hasty glance around but saw no signs of sympathy from the bystanders, so he decided to do as

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

requested and bide his time for revenge. He began again and sang the song through fast enough to suit even Jack, who said:

“Well done, Mr. Stubbs; you may step down. Give him three cheers, gentlemen,” he added turning to the bystanders, who heartily responded.

“Now,” continued Jack, as the noise subsided, “we will have a dance by Mr. Bunn. Hop right up, Bunn, an’ show these gentlemen how you can wiggle them little fat legs o’ your’n.”

“Oh, really, Mr. Winters, I can’t dance; never could, besides my mother always said ’twas wrong,” said Bunn, turning pale.

“Shut up, you old hypocrit,” said Jack, flourishing the revolver. “Ha, ha, ha, but that’s a talkin’ some I ’low. An’ didn’t she tell you ’twas wrong to sell liquor ’n cheat an’ lie? I’ll bet she did. Seems to me you’re rememberin’ you’re bringin’ up rather late, Bunn. But it’s no go; you can jist say a little longer prayer than you aimed to when you go out o’ this business an’ you’ll be all right. So up with you now; no monkeyin’ goes. I’ll whistle and you dance and mind you do it lively.”

Jack’s face had grown sober and Bunn began to mount the box and Jack whistled a lively tune.

To say that Bunn’s attempt were ludicrous would be putting it mildly; the loafer roared with laughter and Jack at times could scarcely keep his mouth in whistling position.

“Hang it, Bunn, can’t you step livelier than that? Why, Barnum’s fat man could beat you dancin’. I’ll tell ye you won’t learn to dance no younger nor get lessons no cheaper, so you’d better get down to business.” And Jack began to whistle.

Bunn tried again, but with little better success. The sweat began to pour down his face in streams although the day was cool, but Jack showed no signs of relenting; he kept whistling and motioning with his gun for Bunn to go on.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

At this point in the program John Reynolds appeared around the corner; he was crossing the street to the post office when his attention was attracted by the proceedings in front of Bunn's saloon.

"What's Jack up to now I wonder," was his mental comment, as he entered the office. He paused a moment, when he came out, to have a better look and a suspicion of a twinkle shone in his eyes as the full situation dawned upon him.

"I think that's the same revolver I crippled for Jack, an' if 'tis he can't hurt anybody," he mused. "Still it might not be an' I reckon I'd better go over an' see." And he crossed the street and joined the group in front of Bunn's. That gentleman paused in his hysterical performances and Jack said:

"Morning, deacon. I'm just tryin' to learn Bunn to dance. Never had such a dull scholar. He says his mother taught him 'twas wrong though, an' I guess that's the reason." And Jack laughed.

"Well, he's danced enough today. Anyway you give me that gun. You might hurt somebody throwin' it around so."

Again Jack's laugh rang out.

"Why, hang it, deacon, that's the old thing you knocked the shoot out of a year or so ago. Tain't loaded and it wouldn't shoot if 'twas, but there 'tis if you want it."

John took the revolver and examined it, then handing it back said:

"No, you couldn't shoot anybody with that. but come on away from here now. You've had fun a plenty today and I want some salmon and pickles."

"All right. deacon." Then turning to Bunn and Stubbs, he said:

"Gentlemen, what I've done. I've done for your own good an' I hope you won't lay it up agin me. Tain't healthy to stay shut up here all the time with so many spirits; a

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

mite o' exercise an' fresh air'll do you good. So long an' the next time you're tempted to pitch beer bottles, count on a day o' reckonin'."

"You can count on a day o' reckonin' fer this," muttered Stubbs, but if Jack heard he made no reply.

"Did you see him, deacon? Did you see him dance! My! but he's graceful as an elephant."

"Now, Jack, you know you got in a muss there once before and got hurt; looks to me like you'd take warning from that and stay away. If you don't you're apt to get hurt worse. They ain't no great love for you and this morning's fun won't increase it any. I can't understand you wantin' to cut sich capers an' run sich risks, an' you'd better stay clear of 'em a spell." They entered Jack's place of business as John finished speaking and Jack said:

"I know you're givin' me straight goods, deacon, but tain't no use. I reckon I'm one o' them as is born to dishonor as the good book says an' Stubbs or me one's likely to cash in most any time. I could see that by the way he looked while he was singin'; you didn't get there in time fer that, deacon. Well, I made him sing Yankee Doodle and I made him sing it lively. But say, deacon, if sich places ain't to go to what are they for? Seems to me now I'm doin' a patriotic act in helpin' to keep 'em a goin.' The government gits lots o' money out of 'em an' 'course the more whisky's sold the more money it gets." Jack's propensity for fun was cropping out again and he resolved to just have a little fun out of the deacon.

"Patriotic! I don't see how you make that out. You ought to be ashamed to talk so even in fun. To be patriotic means to be the best citizen you can yourself and then to do all you can to help others do right," replied John, indignantly.

"Well, then, deacon, do you think these saloons, now for instance, do you think they help people to be good citizens?" asked Jack, smiling.

"Of course they don't; any sane man can see that," an-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

swered John, wondering what Jack was driving at. yet resolved to humor him by answering his questions; he knew Jack had been drinking.

“Well, deacon, who’s responsible for ’em.”

This question coming so unexpectedly brought to John’s mind his and Tom’s argument of the evening before and somewhat staggered the good deacon at first, but he replied promptly:

“They ain’t nobody responsible but them that’s in the business and them that patronize ’em.”

“Well, deacon, ’spose one man’d take a notion to kill another an’ take his money and there wasn’t anything done about it. Another feller sees it and there’s a man he don’t like an’ he jist goes an’ turns up his toes and takes his land an’ money, an’ there’s still nothin’ done till murder an’ robbery gets to be the thing; there wouldn’t be nobody to blame but the men that done the murders an’ the fools didn’t have sense enough to stay out o’ their way would they?”

“Why—why of course they would. Everybody’d be to blame for allowin’ it. The government first, then the people for upholdin’ sich a government,” replied John.

“Jest so, deacon, jest so, but ’spose the government instead o’ stoppin’ it; that is instead o’ hangin’ the murderers; ups and passes laws allowin’ ’em jist to go on killin’ folks pervidin’ they pay the government so much fer the privilege or license an’ further insists that the man what gets the license must be of good moral character so as to have the job done up neat an’ in order I reckon; an’ that they shall have their killin’ place so far from a church, schoolhouse an’ so on, and mustn’t kill nobody but people over twenty-one. I ’spose the government wouldn’t be to blame would it?”

“Yes, I reckon ’twould,” admitted John, “an’ of course the people’d be to blame for supporting sich a government, yet it seems to me that’s different from the liquor business, for of course that’s what you’re meanin’. A

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

murderer can slip up on his victim unaware, while a man or boy who begins to drink knows his danger an' can let it alone if he wants to. Good an' evil has always been in the world and men have always the power to choose good or evil as they please an' when they choose evil I don't see as they've any right to lay it on the government or other people."

"Purty good, deacon, but we ain't always had saloons in the world, an' I've knowed people to be kind o' slipped up on unawares by the liquor business, too. I was, a little, myself. When I was about fifteen I began clerkin' fer a grocer an' he kep what you call a blind tiger. Well, he took a drink or two a day and always offered me a drink too, an' I generally took it. The boss himself was a church member an' some punkin, an' I thought if he could drink an' sell liquor on the sly an' be so much thought of 'twas not so bad after all. My father an' mother died when I was a little shaver an' I'd lived first one place an' then another, till I went to live with the grocer. I stayed with him three years an' then joined a lumber gang an' came out here. I stayed with them three years more and then came to this place; you know about how I've lived since. Oh, yes, deacon, a liquor seller can slip up on his man as well as a murderer. I've knowed 'em to treat boys on the sly an' make drunkards of 'em; an' then, deacon, the murdered man's apt to be a good man an' go to glory when he's killed, but a drunkard you tell me has no chance. Take it all around, deacon, I think the liquor business is worse than the murderin' business 'd be. It kills soul an' body, too."

"It's bad enough I know," replied John, "but, Jack, you know better now than to drink, an' I believe you could quit if you'd try."

"I have tired," said Jack, dropping his jesting mood. "I've tried hard, it seems to me, but it always ends in me gettin' slipped up on some way; sometimes I jist fergit and sometimes I begin with a friend. I begun jist to get a

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

joke on Mack this mornin'." And Jack smiled at the remembrance of it.

"It's mighty dangerous jokin' I'm thinkin'," replied John, gathering up his parcels, "and as I said you'd better keep away from there an' Bunn's too." And John walked out. But he could not set all Jack's words down as simply the ravings of a drunken man, as he tried to do.

"Tom must 'ave been a talkin' to him now," he thought, "and it does kind o' seem to me a body ought to be tryin' to stop it, but I kind o' thought when the old Union was saved an' the niggers free everything was about done."

CHAPTER VII.

One evening about a week later as Mr. Everett and family were retiring for the night, Carl Newman's little boy rushed in saying:

"Oh, Mr. Everett, won't you come quick? My papa's sick an' mama's afraid of him, an' I am too. Do come quick." And the child began to cry.

"Yes, I'll come," said Mr. Everett, reaching for his hat and coat, intending to accompany the child, but no sooner had he been assured that Mr. Everett would go than he darted out of the door and ran to inform his mother of the success of his errand.

"I reckon it's the tremens he's got," said Mr. Everett to his wife. "He's bin drinkin' agin, and has had 'em several times before. I don't like to be by myself with him, but I don't know who to ask to go 'long."

"Surely, any one would go," said Mrs. Everett. "Think of that poor woman and hurry Dan. Ask the first man you come across."

And thus admonished Mr. Everett hurried out. He had not touched liquor since his child was buried and was saving money to buy a home.

He hurried along in the darkness as best he could, but could not see a yard before him and a cold rain was setting in. He was over half way to the Newman house and began to fear he would have to go alone when he was obliged to stop short and step to one side in order to avert a collision with some one who proved to be Tom Long.

"Why, hello, Everett, where're you rushin' to in the rain and dark? Anybody sick?"

"Somethings wrong over to Newman's an' his boy just came for me. 'Spect it's the jimmies an' I don't like go-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

in' by myself. Couldn't go 'long, could you?" said Mr. Everett.

"Well, I could, now," replied Tom, reflectively. "'Tain't jist the kind of a job a feller'd hanker after though. But somebody'll have to go, an' as you say a feller wouldn't want to be by hisself. Yes, I'll go. Come on."

They soon reached the Newman home and entering to Mrs. Newman's come in, they saw a pitiful but revolting scene.

Carl himself sat on an old trunk at one side of the room, leaning against the wall. He seemed utterly exhausted: his eyes were blood-shotten and his face ghastly pale. He wore neither coat nor vest. One hand hung listlessly by his side and with the other he kept pulling at his suspender or brushing restlessly at his clothing. He stared vacantly at Tom and Mr. Everett, but did not speak.

"He's most wore hisself out," said Mrs. Newman, a meek looking little woman, with a child of about six months, in her arms. "He's been bad two or three days and don't eat anything. I couldn't get him to bed's why I sent for you. The doctor's out of town."

"We're glad to help you if we can. Reckon he'll go to bed now?" asked Tom.

"I can't say. He thinks there's everything in the bed, but you can try."

Tom approached Carl saying:

"Come on now, Carl, and rest a bit, you're plum sick."

Carl allowed them to lead him to the bed, and lay down without objecting and Tom and Mr. Everett were silently congratulating themselves on their good management when Carl sprang up with a loud shriek:

"Take 'em away. Let me out; the bed's full of 'em, can't ye see? They're all over me." And the poor fellow brushed frantically at his clothes and the bed.

The men were at his side instantly.

"There ain't nothin' here, Carl," said Tom, throwing back the covers. "See? The bed's all right. Get back in and I'll stay here by you."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“No, I won’t. They’re all over me I tell ye. Can’t you help me get ’em off?” And Carl rubbed his sides with his hands and brushed his face violently in his attempts to free himself from the imaginary reptiles.

Tom Long had seen many cases of drunkenness in his life. He even remembered the time when cases akin to this had appealed to his sense of humor. But he wondered now how he ever could have seen anything funny in them. On the contrary there was that in Carl’s white, drawn face, wild eyes and trembling body that almost horrified him, strong man that he was, and he stood looking at Carl a moment, powerless and mystified.

Carl was growing more and more frantic. Now he would brush at his clothes or stamp on the floor in his effort to shake something from them. The cold sweat was standing out upon his forehead. Now he was calling them to help him and now cursing frightfully at the supposed reptiles even when he could not speak above a whisper for very exhaustion or want of breath.

Finally he began tearing out his hair in great handfuls, and throwing it upon the floor he would stamp upon it as though trying to kill something.

As Tom watched the frenzied efforts of the lost man to rid himself of his imaginary enemies and listened to his curses and blasphemy, a nameless horror crept over him and he seemed for the moment unable to move or speak. There was a creepy, crawly sensation at the roots of his hair he had never felt since when as a boy he had been frightened with ghost stories. He felt that he was in the presence of something that was not earthly. Neither could he believe it to be heavenly. He saw Carl on the edge of a frightful chasm with some unseen hand drawing him closer and closer each moment.

Mrs. Newman clasped her babe to her bosom and rushed from the room, followed by her older child.

Tom roused himself with difficulty, and said:

“Good God, Everett, something’s got to be done. He’s slippin’ right into hell before our very eyes.”

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Do you know anything to do? I don't," was the reply.

"But if you'll stay with him, I'll go to see if the doctor's back."

"Well, go then, but for the Lord's sake hurry. I can't stand this long by myself," said Tom.

Mr. Everett started on his errand and again Tom tried to soothe Carl, going toward him he said: "Now Carl, I think they're all off. Let me help you." And he brushed the trembling and exhausted man all over himself. "There now, they're all off and you must lay down and rest again." And he led him toward the bed. Once or twice he made a feeble effort to resist but was now so weak that Tom had little difficulty in managing him with his one arm. Carl lay quiet but a few moments when he again began struggling with the bed clothes in his attempt to arise. But Tom was resolved he should remain quiet, so he pushed him gently back, saying, "Just be still Carl: Nothin's goin' to hurt ye, an' yair'e about played out tearin' round so—easy now."

As Carl's struggles grew more violent. The wretched man was cursing with every breath, though his voice was scarcely above a whisper, and swearing such frightful oaths that turned Tom's heart sick within him. Strong rough man as he was, words could not express the fear, horror and utter helplessness he felt as he stood over Carl through that long night and watched his struggles in the very grasp of Satan.

After what seemed to Tom an age Mr. Everett returned alone, out of breath and covered with mud. "He hadn't got back so I found out where he was and went after him, but he couldn't leave: a woman dyin' they think, but he sent this: said it 'd quiet him." Mr. Everett prepared the medicine and with much difficulty forced it between Carl's clinched teeth. "I 'lowed you'd think I'd left you, but I ran all the way there an' back," said Mr. Everett.

"'Twas bad on ye; but I'm glad you got the medicine. He's most wore out," replied Tom.

It was nearly two hours before the medicine took any effect and to their dying days Mr. Everett and Tom Long will not forget those two hours beside the lost and ruined

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

man, and for days after Carl's shrieks and curses rang in their ears.

"You an' me ought to be thankful Dan, that we escaped such a fate as this," said Tom, after Carl became more quiet.

"Yes," said Mr. Everett. "It's awful. An' even if the Bible didn't tell what a drunkard's end is, nobody could doubt it after seein' one like this."

"Carl told me he wasn't goin to drink any more: said he had to quit and I was kind o' surprised when I heard he was at it agin', cause Carl could let it alone a long time if he wanted to," said Mr. Everett.

"Well, a feller's apt to say that and mean it too an' then not stick to it," replied Tom.

Carl slept or rested almost an hour when he again became restless. He was given more medicine and held in the bed by main force for the brief rest had made him stronger. But why linger over his suffering? The struggle went on more or less violent another two hours when Carl sank back on the pillows gasping for breath.

"It's no use lettin' him get up, he couldn't stand," said Tom.

"No. He's better off in bed, an' he'd jist wear hisself out anyhow," agreed Mr. Everett.

But that struggle was Carl's last, for soul and body parted almost before they finished speaking.

"He's gone, I believe," said Tom, bending over the bed and taking Carl's hand. The dead man's face was purple and his eyes starting from their sockets. "Yes, he's dead," continued Tom, looking at Mr. Everett in a dazed, questioning way. Both men remained quiet for some minutes, stupefied by the awful fate of the departed soul that both could feel and realize, though neither could have put their feelings into words.

"What had we better do first?" asked Mr. Everett, who was the first to recover. "We'll have to tell his wife of course."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Yes,” said Tom. “She’ll have to know first, then we can dress him.”

But when informed that her husband was dead Mrs. Newman fell across the bed in strong hysterics and passed from one fainting fit to another. Her nerves had been taxed beyond their endurance and with this last strain had given away entirely. The two men looked helplessly at each other a moment.

“I’ll go for my wife,” said Mr. Everett. “She’ll know what to do.”

“Go past and send John over too,” said Tom. “I feel weaker’n a woman myself, and want to get away from here.”

It was daylight now and the sun was just rising as John entered.

“You’ve had a night of it, Everett says,” he remarked to Tom in a low voice by way of greeting.

“May the good Lord save me from such another,” was the reply.

Mr. and Mrs. Everett now reached the house and the latter induced Mrs. Newman to leave the room. She remained with her until she became more calm, then she found clothes in which to dress the dead man, and while the men were preparing him for burial she prepared breakfast for the children.

Not until Carl’s body was ready for burial did Tom take his leave, then, as he stood in the doorway John looked at him a moment curiously and said in surprise, “Why, Tom, I never noticed you bein’ so grey before. Your hair’s white as snow.”

Tom stared at his friend a moment in wonder, then turned to a mirror on the wall. He could scarcely believe his eyes at first, for his hair that on the previous evening had only been slightly streaked with gray was almost white.

At last he smiled grimly and said:

“Wall, I don’t think I needed that to remind me o’ last night, but the Lord knows, an’ I call on Him to witness,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

that from this day I'll fight the cussed liquor business as long as I live, if He'll only show me how."

And Tom pulled his hat well over his eyes and walked from the room.

Jack Winters was standing in the doorway of his restaurant and as Tom was passing he said:

"So poor Carl's gone sure enough, has he?"

"Yes; he's been dead a couple o' hours now," was the reply.

"Well, Mack's to thank fer that I reckon." And Jack told of Jones' loss at McGregor's on the day Carl began drinking, adding, "And I'm satisfied he gave Carl whisky instead o' druggin' him. Of course I don't know just how it worked Carl, but I can drink beer and it won't make me want whisky, and I know of others further along than I am that can do the same. Then too, Mack 'd a had to a either drugged him or got him drunk before he could a got 'im away from Jones, and he didn't drug him."

Tom's swarthy face had grown dark and terrible while Jack was speaking and as he finished Tom turned and strode across the street toward McGregor's saloon, while Jack looked after him in surprise.

"Well, the Devil I say! Who ever thought o' startin' him off like that? If it had been the Deacon now—but he ain't no match for Mack with that one arm. I better go see after him I reckon." And Jack started in pursuit of Tom. He paused, however, when he reached the door of the saloon.

Tom had seized McGregor by the coat collar and was shaking him violently, while the latter was evidently too much astonished to resist.

"You infernal imp o' Satan," Tom was saying. "Did you or did you not mix Carl's beer with whisky? Tell me before I shake the life out o' your worthless carcass."

"I don't know what you're talkin' about, Mr. Long," stammered McGregor.

"Well, then, Carl Newman's jist died: slid right into hell afore our very eyes, an' we couldn't do a thing. He had

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

the jimmies: he begun drinkin' right here in your saloon an' Jack says you tricked him into takin' the first drink an' by heaven if I was sure you did you'd never live to send another man to the devil: No, sir; I'd kill you right here. Why the very hogs on the street'd run from you if they had sense. The devil and his angels 'll no doubt get scared at their own work and hide when they see you comin' to join 'em."

So spoke this uncouth westerner, betrayed for the moment into feelings of common justice. Doubtless when calmer moments came Tom would remember that McGregor had a right, granted him by the most enlightened people in the world, to ruin and send to hell just as many human souls as he could cajole or trick into being sent. Perhaps when he remembered this he would repent his words and acts. But now as he towered above McGregor, white with anger he felt that he would be doing the world a good turn by choking the life out of the cowering wretch before him. Instead, however, after another violent shake Tom flung him from him and left the place.

And McGregor's black soul dimly understood for the moment and silently recognized the justice of the punishment for he neither lifted a hand in defense nor sought redress in earthly courts.

Carl was buried next day. Caught, poor fellow, in an unguarded moment, when he thought he was safe, and sold to the devil for *money*, and the monster in human guise who does this work is protected in it by that world-wide emblem of freedom, our, to us, beautiful flag. But what an unsightly thing this same flag must be in the sight of Jehovah, God, as, dyed red with the blood of many such as Carl, at home, it floats over shipload after shipload of rum, protecting them in their deadly mission to the helpless and unsuspecting heathen beyond the sea.

CHAPTER VIII.

“William, what upon earth is all that noise up the street about? Surely there’s a fire or something,” said Miss Bellmont, coming hurriedly into the library one evening, where her nephew lay reading.

William tossed his paper aside and opening a window he listened a moment in silence then threw back his head and laughed.

“But this is a good one aunt,” he said, laughing still. “Why, you’ve always been such a stickler for patriotism you ought to be able to recognize it in any form.”

“Patriotism,” repeated she in surprise.

“Certainly,” said William, enjoying her puzzled looks. “That commotion is nothing more nor less than grand old American patriotism turned loose and goin’ at full speed. Fires and tornadoes are not to be compared with it for destructive ability once it gets under a full head of steam and a fair start. In short, if we did not have a sort of safety valve in the shape of a Fourth of July once a year there would doubtless be few of us left when the campaign is over to enjoy the great peace and prosperity always promised at such times. Yes, aunt, you may doubtless have forgotten that this was campaign year and that we have just had an election. Well, those ear-splitting shrieks and squeaking horns are meant to show forth the rejoicing of the victorious party, which has just saved this beloved country of ours from going to rack and ruin for another four years.”

Miss Bellmont made no reply, but thoroughly disgusted, she sat silently listening to the tumult that seemed growing louder and nearer. William resumed:

“Of course, having always lived in such an out-of-the-way corner of the globe as Bellmont, you can’t know much

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

about the world at large. This patriotism now seems to be a sort of perennial affliction, more acute in the summer and fall of every fourth year, and confined chiefly to men and boys. Therefore, being only a woman, you cannot understand the grand emotions that stir the breasts of men and boys, and prompt such actions as these." And William nodded toward the street below, where the noisy throng was passing.

"Mercy on us! Won't somebody be killed?" said Miss Bellmont, who did not reply to William's remarks, and it is doubtful if she heard them.

"Probably there will," replied he, coolly. "The disease frequently proves fatal, while many are left crippled for life. Sick persons are made worse, and some are frightened to death; but what of that? We must show our patriotism at any cost."

"William, you don't approve of such performances as this?" said his aunt, severely.

"It matters little whether I approve or not. They go on just the same," was the reply. "But this is only the end of the show. You should witness it from the beginning in order to judge of its possibilities as an entertainment and to form any idea of how one of our free American political campaigns must impress one newly arrived on the field of action."

"William, you would make one of our most sacred institutions nothing but a ridiculous comedy," reproved Miss Bellmont.

"I am neither making nor unmaking it," said he. "I'm only describing it as I find it looks to many persons to-day, and I insist I have seen but little in the last few years to cause me to doubt their judgment. Let me describe just one campaign to you as it looks to me, if I can. Come, now, you have always accused me of skepticism; for once I will be a simple-hearted body with implicit faith in all men. We are at the beginning of a Presidential campaign, and I am anxious to vote for the best interests of my country if I can learn what they are. I employ the usual methods of

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

learning at such times—subscribe for a newspaper and attend the first political gathering I hear of. I listen attentively and begin to wonder if the men the speaker is describing are anywhere outside the penitentiary or lunatic asylum. Such a gang as they must be! and banded together to rob the people and ruin the government. His opponents of course. Surely no one would vote for such men and I go away feeling that I have made up my mind. But in a few days another man comes along equally as brilliant and long winded as his predecessor and he informs us that the other man is the villian in the show and that everything he said were gross fabrications.

Now to my extremely wise and superior friend, who is fixed and immovable politically, this is all very plain: his man is right and the other wrong, and he is surprised at my want of intelligence, while his equally wise and immovable brother in the opposite party is quite as certain that his man is right and the other wrong and he is equally amazed at my stupidity, but I, the poor undecided voter am sorely puzzled to know who has lied.

Finally, however, I make up my mind one way or the other and no sooner do I do so than I catch the disease myself and whoop and yell and become generally as ridiculous as any one. Election day comes and my recently adopted party is successful. I feel as jubilant as though I had just discovered the north pole or invented perpetual motion. But what has become of our windy friends? I had supposed the rejoicings of the one and lamentations of the other would be heard from Maine to California. I seek them in shady groves and at the rear end of passing trains where they were wont to be found, and lo, they are not. I wonder if they have effected a meeting somewhere and swallowed each other bodily. Anyway they seem utterly to have disappeared from the face of the earth: the small boy and the melodious tin horn have taken their places and I go cheering them about instead. Pandemonium breaks loose everywhere and each one vies with the other in adding to the general uproar as you have just observed.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

While speaking William had been slowly pacing the floor: his hands behind him and an amused smile on his lips, as he spoke the last words he paused a moment in front of his aunt who said reprovingly:

"I think, William, instead of ridiculing the men who are devoting their lives to the good and welfare of your country you would better be trying to help them."

"I am not ridiculing men who are devoting their lives to the good and welfare of my country. I am speaking of the men who are devoting their lives to the good and welfare of their own pocketbooks and their own honor and glory, at the expense of my country," replied he. "Let me see; where was I? Oh, yes." And William resumed his walk. "We are nearing the end of the final act, but what has become of our windy friends? Fear not for them. They have gone whence they came. If they have been elected to some office they sit them quietly down to enjoy the fatness thereof and straight way forgets pledges or promises alike and the more money they get for forgetting the faster they forget. Or, if they have been defeated they hie them away to some secluded nook and prepare to find fault with their successful rivals. If this government cannot be run by them and their party they are going to move heaven and earth, or at least their part of the earth, to keep any one else from running it; so they keep up a continual howl of some sort until campaign year comes again when they come forth from their lair, enticed either by a political plum or a sum of money, takes on a fresh supply of wind 'influence' and patriotism and again starts howling about the earth seeking whom they may devour and if one is to judge from the gaping, cheering crowds that greet them from time to time then that arch inventor of humbugs, Phineas T. Barnum, was right when he said the American people loved to be humbugged. Verily we enjoy being devoured."

William paused a moment and leaning on the mantle gazed reflectively into the fire while his aunt remarked: "It seems to me you are wanting in respect, William, still I suppose you are in a better position to judge than I, and I know there is something wrong, else our laws would be

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

enforced and crime lessened. You were something or other yourself once were you not? I don't remember just now what it was but you told me something of it at the time."

William smiled as he replied: "No, aunt, I was never anything. I was not elected: what is more I was not even nominated. It was on this wise: Shortly after my marriage some of my friends asked me to allow them to present me as a candidate for nomination for an important city office. Now, in order to fully appreciate my feelings at the discoveries I made you must remember you had taught me that our chief officials were men of uncompromising honor: fitting examples for me to follow and imitate. Along with this you will remember you taught me never to countenance evil in any form or to compromise with it in any way. 'Go not thou with the world to do evil,' 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,' and like passages were kept constantly before me and I had tried to respect them, with varied success. Listen then and tremble at the brilliant career you doubtless spoiled by your old-fashioned bringing up. First though I would add that up to this time I had almost idolized my party: it could do no wrong: The opposite party consisted chiefly of a species of lunatics, harmless as long as kept out of power. I find that most men have experienced the same feelings while a few stubbornly cling to them through life.

"I fancied when my friends asked me to become a candidate for nomination that they saw in me the prerequisite to a good and true official and I resolved if elected not to disappoint them. I had not been in the city two years without learning something of the corruption of its management and I was determined that with my part of it there should be no cause for complaint. My friends who had recognized my ability should not be disappointed. O, vain and presumptuous youth that I was! Judge of my humiliation and chagrin when I learned I had been selected solely for the money my father-in-law and myself would likely contribute to the campaign fund and the 'pull' we would have on the factory hands. But the hardest blow was yet

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

to fall for I pocketed my wounded pride and continued the fight. One night at a meeting where I had made the leading speech the 'boss' came to me when the meeting closed and said:

"Hang it all, Belmont, do you want to kill yourself?"

I looked my surprise and he continued:

"Well, that's just what you are doing politically. You don't want to come out against some things as you do. I find most young men make this mistake and I thought I'd warn you in time. You must talk to suit your crowd, and the crowd you've just addressed don't want reforms. You've left a bad impression and must do something to remove it. The people of this ward are accustomed to treats of almost all kinds; they look upon it as their right and upon this ward almost entirely depends your election if you are nominated. Now if you don't care to do it yourself and will leave a hundred or so with me I will undertake to smooth matters over for you."

"And how will you go about this smoothing?" I asked. "If I am to furnish the money to do it, I want to know how it is to be done."

"Well, most candidates prefer to furnish the money and ask no questions, but if you want to know it's something like this. First I shall explain to the ward leaders that your speech was intended only as a blind to those who favored reform. Then I shall leave sums of money at different saloons for treats, having it understood that it comes from you; where money or anything else is preferred I shall furnish it instead of the treats, but this ward is composed largely of liquor dealers and it's going to take some slick talking to convince them you didn't mean all you said this evening about making them abide by the laws, but I believe I can do it if I'm not limited as to money. Then if you are nominated, and I think there is little doubt of it, it will take from four to six thousand to carry the ward for you."

I was appalled at this shameless acknowledgment of crime; it was made in such a matter of course way and I have

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

learned since that men can actually tamper with and cozen crime until they are unable to judge right and wrong, but I resolved now to probe the matter to the bottom and taking out pencil and book I asked:

"And how much will it take to carry the other wards? Since I'm in for this run I want to know all about it."

"Oh, probably a few thousand will carry them all. It will depend considerably on how much the other man is willing to pay."

I was gaining wisdom fast.

"And how am I to make back all this?" I asked, feeling there was more for me to learn. "The salary is not large."

"No; the salary is small, but you can easily double it if you are smart," said this sage of political ethics. "You can make much of it back off of this same ward by not taking too close notice of the crimes and misdemeanors and much more off of the city in different ways. The present incumbent, I believe, has made a snug fortune since he's been in office, but you are young and will need to use some caution."

More knowledge for me. Verily I was becoming surfeited with wisdom. I looked at my "boss" more closely. A bloated form, red eyes and a repulsive visage were his chief characteristics. He also smelled strongly of rum. And this was the man I was to obey if I hoped to make a successful campaign. I must furthermore furnish money to buy whisky for our mill hands and make it back by cheating the city or closing my eyes to crime.

I resolved not to be "bossed." I remarked as much to my would-be "boss." I also told him if it required a thief to fill the office successfully I had not prepared myself for the place and that he would have to look for a nominee elsewhere, for I would neither furnish money to buy votes or to furnish liquor for my would-be supporters. I left him staring after me as though he doubted my sanity. My father-in-law tried to reason with me. I was right in theory, he admitted, but practically such procedure would do little good. Some one less conscientious would secure the office and I had thrown away a chance to be of service in im-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

proving the city management. He almost convinced me I had acted rashly, but later in the campaign when I saw men staggering from saloons shouting and hiccoughing for their favorite candidate I in no wise regretted my decision."

"But, William, surely our higher officials do not know of this dishonest way of securing votes?"

"Then it is because they do not wish to know. I have made somewhat of a study of political proceeding since that rude awakening, and I defy any man to go through a campaign of today successfully, and use strictly honorable means, that is, if he has any competition in the shape of unprincipled opponents. And what are young men to think when they come to know this? They have been taught to love, honor and try to imitate the prominent men of today. What then must they conclude when brought face to face with our politics? as he must be sooner or later. If he has been taught the first principles of common honesty he cannot fail to see the vein of fraud and crime running through the whole. What then should he do?"

"I should think he would better set about remedying them," said Miss Bellmont, decidedly.

"Straight to the point as usual, aunt," replied William, smiling. "But how is he to set about remedying it? You would be surprised at the number of persons who do not want politics remedied. Who want men in our offices and legislatures that they can buy or influence, and would fight any change as disastrous to their interests. The railroad magnate, for instance, wants men he can induce to work for him, while the liquor dealer wants men who will, for a consideration, look after his interests and so on. What is to be done about it? There is never a dearth of candidates either. There are many so-called Christian men who, in the heat of a campaign furnish money for drinks and then partake of the sacrament of their Lord as unconscionably as though they had not pushed their weaker brother a step nearer the awful pit. What can be done about it? If you can puzzle it all out, aunt, you will have solved some of the problems of the age." And William resumed his paper.

CHAPTER VIII.

And now, if you please, we will follow Paul Rivers through a portion of one of his busy days among the destitute and distressed of that great city.

Early in the morning he visited the sick and afflicted in the crowded tenements. Two years ago these same tenements were so dangerous that it was as much as one's life was worth to venture into them unprotected, but all that was now changed and by this one man's efforts. The rooms though small were mostly clean and neat and the occupants self-respecting and self-supporting in a large measure, though Paul Rivers still treated those in need of a physician and as he passed from room to room either to attend a patient or to learn the needs of some dependant, he might have been pardoned a feeling of pride or exultation at the result of his work. But he felt neither; he had no time for them: his whole mind was absorbed in *doing* and he was well content for his Master to note the results and receive all the praise.

In one room there was a boy of six crippled for life by a drunken father. In another there was an aged woman whose only son had been killed in a drunken brawl. He had been her only support and she was a hopeless paralytic: hence she was destitute.

Can you wonder that cases of this kind and many worse ones that might be mentioned served to rouse his antagonism and kept him bold to war against the liquor traffic in what seemed the very face of defeat?

When his work here was finished he went to the jail room. Here it was his custom to meet criminals more or less hardened almost daily.

The first persons interviewed this morning were two boys who were evidently much distressed and ashamed.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Well, boys, why are you here?" he asked.

"We—I guess we was drinkin," replied one.

"Yesterday?"—and Mr. Rivers produced notebook and pencil.

"Yes, sir; we didn't aim to, but got with some others an' was led into it."

"How old are you?" Was the next question asked
"And you will tell me your names, please."

"My name's Bob Carpenter, and I'm nineteen," said one.

"I'm John Oaker, and I'm twenty," replied the other.

"Well, boys, where did you get your liquor?" now asked Mr. Rivers. "If you will be strictly honest with me I may be able to help you."

"We got it at Sanders."

"Did Mr. Sanders know you were under age?" asked Mr. Rivers.

"I don't know. He didn't ask us, and we didn't tell him."

"Well, boys, you must learn to think and be on the lookout for danger hereafter or you will make wrecks of your own lives and sadden those of your friends. Do your parents or friends know where you are?"

"I ain't got no parents or friends," replied the boy who gave the name of John Oaker.

"My mother don't know where I'm at," said Bob Carpenter. "And I don't want her to. She'd rather hear I was dead."

"I think not," said Mr. Rivers. "And if you will tell me where she lives I will undertake to inform her."

"She'll have to know, I reckon. But you'll tell her I'm sorry, won't you?" And the boy's lip began to tremble. "She lives at 230 Sixth street."

"I will tell her you are very sorry, and that you have learned a lesson you will not soon forget. Is it not so?" answered Mr. Rivers.

"Yes; if I get out o' this I'll stay clear o' whisky the rest o' my life." And Paul Rivers turned away.

"If you've got time, sir, there's a woman over there you

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ought to see," said the jailer. "She was brought in Saturday night and seems so downhearted, you might cheer her up a little."

"I will see her." And Mr. Rivers followed the jailer to a door on the opposite side of the house. The jailer opened the door and Mr. Rivers entered and the door was again closed. He saw sitting on a stool a woman of fifty or sixty years of age. Her head was bowed in her hands and her back was toward the door and she neither moved nor spoke when Paul Rivers entered. He walked around and paused in front of her, but she did not raise her head. But Paul Rivers was accustomed to all forms of greeting and said kindly:

"Good morning, Mrs. Meeks. I came, hoping to be able to serve you in some way. Will you tell me your trouble?" Then she lifted her face, deeply lined with grief or remorse and looked at her visitor a moment in silence with a pair of dark eyes from which looked intense suffering and despair. Then she replied in a cold, hard voice:

"It would do no good and would only keep you from more worthy subjects. No; you are only wasting your time and may as well go." And she dropped her head back in her hands as though to end the conversation.

"You will let me be the judge of that," replied Paul Rivers. "God is able to save to the uttermost, and no matter how great your crime, he is faithful to forgive if you are penitent. Shall we read or pray?"

Again the woman raised her face and replied in the same cold unnatural voice:

"Neither. Prayer is for the penitent and the reading of His word for those who do His will."

"But surely if you have committed a crime you are sorry and wish God's forgiveness," persisted Mr. Rivers. He could feel nothing but pity for the unfortunate woman, for she did not look like one hardened in crime.

"It's no use, I tell you. I have committed—or tried to commit a murder, and I do not repent. No, I only wish I'd

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

succeeded," she added fiercely. "So you see, it's no use wasting your time on me."

But Paul Rivers felt he could not leave her so and after a moment's thought he said:

"Would you mind telling me about it. Some one must have done you some great wrong."

"No; I can't say he did. In the eyes of the law he was only going about his own business. In plain words, then," she added, seeing her visitor's puzzled look. "He was only offering my boy a drink of rum."

"Ah, and you thought he was trying to make a drunkard of him—had he ever tasted liquor before?"

"No, sir," was the brief reply.

"Then what made you so afraid for him to taste it?" persisted Mr. Rivers, thinking if she could only be induced to talk of her sin or grief it would relieve her mind and save the reason he feared was already tottering. "To be sure the first drink is dangerous but not enough so to justify you in breaking both the laws of your God and your country."

She flashed him a scornful glance as he finished speaking and said bitterly:

"My country indeed! I have no country, sir. I have a place where I am permitted to exist, but a country I have never had. You ask me why I was so afraid for Harry to taste liquor. I will tell you. I supposed you would leave me when you found what I had done but presume you are used to meeting crime. Yes, I'll tell you all about it. It doesn't matter now what people think of me. I'll be sent to prison, they tell me, for a long time and I'm old now and never expect to leave it alive. What a disgrace for my boys! Mother died in prison." And the lines deepened on her face and the far away look that had momentarily left her eyes returned.

"You have more than one son, then?"

"Yes, I have two living and one dead," she replied, dreamily, then adding hastily, "Oh, yes, I started to tell you why I tried to kill Sanders for offering Harry a drink

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

of rum. When my boys were all babies, the oldest only four years old, my husband died a drunkard's death. He had long foreseen his end but could not break the habit and often begged me to do all in my power to prevent our boys tasting liquor for he feared they might inherit the taste from him. When he finally died my baby was only two weeks old and the shock his suffering and awful death gave me caused me a long illness. It was a horrible death. I can see him yet." And she paused again with a shudder.

"But you recovered, and did your best to teach your boys as their father wished," said Mr. Rivers, wishing to turn her thoughts from her husband's death.

"Yes, I got well at last," she resumed. "We had a little home here in this city—it was only a town then—but all the money we had saved was spent during my illness and when I was able to be about I found myself in debt with little chance of getting out without selling our home and this I wished to keep. I did sewing, washing or anything I could get to do the first year, but was barely able to make a living for my children. In the meantime a factory had started near where we lived and they hired women because they could get them cheaper. Yes, because I was a woman I was obliged to work for about half what they would have paid a man; but I was glad to get the work. I could make more than I had been making at home, but I had to leave my children alone. Well, I worked at the factory over three months and had paid some on my debts when my oldest boy took the fever. He was sick nearly six weeks before he died. This left me with more debts and a poorer chance to pay them, as I could not leave the little children long alone. I worked at what I could get to do at home and managed to keep us in bread and clothes another year when I thought I might try the factory again. But now a new trial came up: I found that I must leave my home as I had been unable to pay the taxes and it was going to be sold. It seemed to me they might have left me that. It wasn't much to the government—your government, sir, not mine; but it was all I had. Well, we left it and went to a little

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

hut closer the factory where I worked a few years longer. My boys were soon old enough to help me a little, but I was always uneasy when they were out of my sight. The saloon-keepers were worse in those days than they are now, or rather they were bolder. I'd known them to coax very young boys into their shops and get them drunk and I'd known many a boy to be ruined that way, and I was always afraid for mine, though I'd warned and cautioned many times. But I'm tiring you, sir, and keeping you from more deserving persons, so I will pass over this period of anxiety on my part. My boys both grew to young manhood without tasting liquor: I had kept them in school and they were fairly well educated and together we had paid all the debts and bought us a little home and I was beginning to think I might spend my old age in peace. Then the war with Spain began and John, my oldest boy, decided to go. I hated to part with him, yet was proud of him for wishing to go. My father had been a soldier, so I bade him a cheerful good-bye and Harry and I consoled ourselves with the thought that he would soon return and we planned little improvements about the place by way of surprise. We heard from him from time to time and greatly enjoyed his letters until one came one day that almost drove me mad. No, he was not killed or wounded: I could have borne that; but he told me that most of the men and officers took a drink occasionally and that it was not looked upon there as it was at home and that he sometimes took a drink himself, but that I need not worry. He would not drink when he came home. He did not know how I would feel about it, poor boy, and only told me because he was used to telling me everything he did. I forgot to tell you that my boys do not know how their father died. I wished them to honor and respect his memory and I kept this from them. So they cannot understand what a dreadful thing a drink of rum seems to me. I couldn't sit still in the house after I read John's letter and realized the dreadful danger he was in. It would be weeks before a letter could reach him and in the meantime what might not happen? The fearful habit might then be fixed. It

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

was after supper when the letter came and Harry had gone to market so I started to meet him, thinking the walk would quiet my nerves and cool my head, which seemed ready to burst. I walked hastily along until I came to the main part of town. I was not surprised at not meeting Harry. He had only been gone a short time. I do not remember even looking for him, my mind was so full of the other boy so far away. I walked almost through the city and paused only when I happened to think if Harry returned before me he would not know where I was, so I walked toward home, going a shorter way, and in so doing I passed Sanders' saloon. I don't know how I came to look in. I've always hated the places and usually hurried by, looking some other way. But that night as I passed I looked in and there, standing by the door, was my Harry, and with him a friend who worked with him at the factory. He had the market basket on his arm and I knew by the parcels in it he had done his trading. While I stood watching him, for I could neither move nor speak, Sanders came from behind the bar with two glasses of rum. Harry's friend took one and drank it off and Sanders offered the other to Harry, but he refused it and turned to leave the place. I heard Sanders' loud laugh and he said something I could not hear; but Harry paused and again Sanders offered him the glass. Then, sir, something in my head snapped. I can recall nothing clearly, but I remember opening the door and rushing at Sanders with all my strength. I remember seizing a knife from somewhere and of seeing Sanders lying on the floor in a pool of blood. Then Harry took me away and they brought me here. Sanders was alright in an hour or so and may go on with his hellish work unmolested. He can ruin and send to a drunkard's grave just as many boys as he can induce to drink and no one says him nay; and *your* government *lets* him sir, and *profits* by it—and you expect me to love a country where such crimes are permitted. No, I hate it; if a wretched woman's curse could harm it, then I would curse it. Harry told me afterward that Sanders had just got on a lot of new liquors and was treating everybody and that Sam Brown

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

wanted him to stop with him and Harry said he had about decided to take a drink when I entered so I saved him from that and I'm glad I did it."

"My poor woman," said Paul Rivers. "I cannot deny that my government permits many unjust and wicked things, that it might in some measure prevent, and no one deploras the fact more than myself. Yet can we not leave the punishment of the wicked to God, who in his own time will judge both nation and man and mete out to each the just reward of their works?"

Mrs. Meeks listened quietly until he had finished when she said with bitter reproach in her voice:

"You think, then, that I and others like me when we see our sons and husbands or brothers it may be sisters or daughters ruined by drink and sent to torment, for that's where they go if the Bible's true, you think we ought to be reconciled and consoled because those who sent them there are likely to go themselves. Well, some may find comfort that way but I can't. I want my boys to be good honorable men but they are constantly exposed to such temptations and I—I am here a living disgrace to them—but I'm not sorry; no, I'm not sorry; I only wish I'd succeeded." And the woman arose from the stool and began restlessly pacing the cell. She seemed to have forgotten her visitor entirely and as Paul Rivers had already given more time to her than it was his wont to give to any one prisoner he left the cell, feeling that his visit had been in vain. If this poor woman had been protecting her son from a poison that would have destroyed only his body, her act would have been justifiable, but since she was protecting him from a poison that would destroy both body and soul she must foresooth, be imprisoned and of course we are far too loyal and patriotic American citizens to question the justice of the act, but as the mother languished in jail there was a bitter sense of injustice in her heart.

The next time Paul Rivers visited the jail he was informed by the jailer that Mrs. Meeks had been removed to an insane asylum.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Ah, I feared as much,” said Mr. Rivers.

“Yes, she flew at me like mad one day. Said I was Sanders and was tryin’ to ruin her boy. They took her away the next day. The boy, too, now is nearly crazy. Says it’s his fault an’ so on. But Paul Rivers had passed on and it is doubtful if he heard the jailer’s words. His thoughts were of Mrs. Meeks and others that like her suffered because of the accursed liquor traffic and his face wore a sad look, his usually erect form was somewhat stooped and his step was slow as he turned from the jail. He had felt discouraged and dejected for several days. Why, he could scarcely have told. He had been accustomed to the darker side of humanity: to witnessing suffering and listening to tales of grief and sin the greater part of his life yet of late they affected him more. He could no longer listen quietly to a story of sin or grief, do all in his power to comfort or relieve the afflicted soul and then dismiss the incident from his mind. They seemed to follow and haunt him. Even at night when he should have been resting some face stamped with sin or sorrow would arise before him and refuse to be put away except to make room for another. He wondered as he walked along if it was because of any neglect of duty on his part and rapidly in his mind he ran over the last twenty-five years of his life, but without finding anything whereof to accuse himself. Like the Paul of old he could say without egotism: “I have fought a good fight.” But what good had it done? Looking at the result of his work this morning he felt he might just as well been standing all these years beating his hands against a stone wall. There seemed to be just as much wickedness in the world and criminals just as bold as though he had never existed. Forgotten for the time were the many whom he had helped and encouraged to live better lives. He also forgot, if he had ever known, how many keepers of dens of iniquity had learned to tremble at his approach and grow less bold in their hideous work, for Paul Rivers could be as stern and fearless as he was kind and gentle if occasion demanded it. Several times he had been warned that his very life was in danger because

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

he had caused some of these last named persons to be punished for their crimes, but he had refused to heed them or to pause in his work.

But he was thinking of none of these things as he walked toward his office or home, this morning. His mind was filled with thoughts of the sin and misery still to be found in that one city and what seemed to him his fruitless efforts to mitigate it.

Arriving at his office he sank into a chair, threw his arms across his desk and rested his head wearily upon them; too utterly depressed and discouraged to think or pray. He remained for some moments in this Gethsemane but at last could bear no longer the weight of crime and suffering that seemed crushing him and cried out in agony to One who had borne the sorrows and sins of a world: "Oh, Lord, how long—how long wilt Thou bear with man's iniquity and nation's crimes? How long wilt thou withhold justice from men who are daily starting men and women on the road to destruction, from a nation that compromises with such crime and from thine own people who stand idly by, consenting unto it all? Oh, God, increase our faith and our strength or we faint by the wayside. We know in Thine own good time that the wicked must cease from doing wickedness and the weary may rest in peace but oh, Father, speed the time for Thy Son's sake and the innocent ones who are suffering because of the wicked of the world."

It was only a few words wrung brokenly from an overburdened heart nor did the speaker raise his head when he had finished. He still felt depressed and resumed his gloomy thought, Why did not Christians take more interest in saving souls? Why were they not trying to destroy evils that ruined so many, both men and women? And then his own efforts arose mockingly before him. What had he accomplished to justify him in condemning others for not following his example? How strong were the workers of iniquity! And yet to admit that they could not be overcome would be to admit that they were stronger than God.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

He raised his head at last and reached for the Bible he always left on his desk for reference during interviews with penitent or grief stricken callers of whom he had many. As he turned its worn leaves he remembered that this was the third Bible he had actually worn out this way. Surely such work ought not to be in vain.

Presently he paused in his idle turning of the leaves as his eyes rested on a passage of scripture that had once warned and threatened him but which now came like a soothing balm to his troubled soul as he slowly read it over. It was Ezekiel 3-17-21.

When God had first called him to preach His word, he had hesitated: his prospects as a physician had been so brilliant and he had spent so much time preparing himself for what he meant to make his life work, that it cost him a struggle to give it up, but one night when he took up his Bible these same verses had caught his eye and threateningly pointed out to him his duty and he had hesitated no longer. He had done all in his power to warn the wicked and righteous. He had gone from place to place wherever there was a dearth of churches or ministers and preached the word unceasingly. But his work had been chiefly confined to the extremely poor or wicked who seldom attended church. He had gone from one miserable home to another, or gathered a few together in one place and taught them the gospel. He also found ample opportunity for exercising his skill as a physician and had performed some wonderful cures among the poor who otherwise must have died, being unable to pay for like treatment. Such skill as he possessed could not long be hid and he was soon sought for by the rich as well as poor, but seldom went except in most urgent cases and then refused to set any price upon his work. He wished to be known as a minister and missionary and not as a physician.

Gradually the people had learned to respect his wishes and ceased to offer him pay for his services which they felt, however, could not be accepted without some return, and many a generous check was sent him with no clue to the sender with the simple statement that it was to be used in his work at his own discretion and many a well filled box of

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

clothing and provisions came in the same way with the same instructions.

Once he had found the only son of a wealthy merchant in a liquor house. He had been drugged, robbed and beaten until he was in a pitiable and dangerous condition but Paul Rivers had rescued him, nursed him back to health and sent him home a Christian man. The father's gratitude knew no bounds but Paul Rivers had quietly but firmly refused all offers of pay, therefore the father had sought out his address and inquired into his work and ever after made it his business to contribute liberally in the manner before stated. If one man could perform such miracles as this one had wrought in his son surely he deserved help and encouragement. And in this and like cases Paul Rivers had made his name and it was from such sources that he obtained most of the means for carrying on his great work. He had a very little income of his own and lived very plainly in a cheap but respectable section of the city and took his meals at a very moderate boarding house. All he received from the sources mentioned and every cent he could spare from his own small income went to relieve suffering of some sort and to promote the cause of Christ.

Yes, he believed he had done all one man could do, to warn the wicked and to help them, and to make the road easier for them when they did turn and gradually all the cloud of depression lifted. If he had done all he could he was not responsible for results: he would take up his burden again and bear it bravely to the end leaving the result of his saving to God, and when he again went forth it was with his wonted cheerfulness, energy and patient endurance that had won for him the love and respect of all the better portion of humanity. But this same energy and patient perseverance had also made for him many bitter enemies among the wicked and unprincipled. In thought and deed and action if not in so many words they seemed to say to him: "Why have you come to torment us before the time? Let us alone." That has been the cry of Satan's agents from the beginning. They only want to be let alone to enslave and destroy mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

“William, I’m afraid there is something really wrong with your wife,” said Miss Bellmont, one evening as she met her nephew in the hall. “I have noticed it for some time, but she acts so strange this evening. I wonder you have not noticed it yourself. She will permit neither her maid nor myself to come near her and actually threw the brushes from the dresser at Felice when she attempted to enter the room. Was there ever insanity or anything of the kind in the family?”

“Where is Isabelle now?” asked Bellmont, without replying to his aunt’s remarks.

“In her room. She looks feverish and excited and I advise you to call a physican at once,” was the reply. “She may be on the verge of nervous prostration or insanity.”

To her surprise and perplexity William mounted the stairs without a word and she, not caring to follow, entered the sitting room and seated herself in a rocker in a more perturbed state of mind than she remembered being in before. She had had much experience with illness of various kinds, for, though having had no family of her own, she had been the nurse and counselor of the whole neighborhood, and was never more at home than in the sick-room, where her firmness and promptness, as well as her patience and common sense, were appreciated by patient and physician alike. But Isabelle’s case she felt was quite beyond her. She had never seen anything like it, and though she and Isabelle had few thoughts and tastes in common, Miss Bellmont seldom felt aught but pity for the weaker woman. She had insisted upon consulting Isabelle about the household management, asking her advice about dealing with this servant or that one, more with a view to keeping her

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

interested in her house and servants than from a hope of gaining information; for Isabelle knew nothing of management and cared less. She would permit her servants to do entirely as they pleased for a time, then in a sudden fit of reformation she would forbid all privileges previously granted and discharge many of them indiscriminately and secure new ones. This mode of procedure could only prove demoralizing to both mistress and servant, and Miss Bellmont had found many difficult problems to solve when she took the reins in her own hands. But she had brought order out of it all, and the few remaining servants had learned to respect her. They found in her a mistress kind, but firm, and they seldom ventured to question her wisdom or disobey her orders, and she was just beginning to think her worst trials ended when this new problem presented itself and, looking at it as she might, it wore an air of mystery that was provoking to her. William, she now felt certain, had known of it for some time. Then why had he not informed her? Did he think his wife was going mad and wish to keep it from her? She could think of no other possible solution of the problem, and yet she believed if this were true William would have told her.

Presently she heard his step as he slowly descended the stairway. He entered the room and sank wearily into a chair without speaking. Miss Bellmont noted the troubled look on his face and said:

“Is your wife very ill, William? Why do you not call a physician? Is there anything I can do?”

“Isabelle is sleeping; she is not ill; therefore needs no physician, and there is nothing you can do at present,” he replied, slowly, after a moment’s thought. “You will have to know, aunt; it is right you should, and I have been wanting to tell you for some time, but dreaded to do so, and scarcely know how without shocking you; but the simple fact is, Isabelle has long been addicted to the use of wine, and of late takes more than she ought. I have only known it a short time, and am at a loss how to act.”

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Miss Bellmont looked at her nephew a moment in silent amazement, scarcely comprehending his meaning; then she exclaimed:

“William! You don’t mean to tell me that your wife is drunk!”

William smiled bitterly as he said:

“You will never learn discrimination, aunt. In ordinary cases I presume that would be the proper word, but Isabelle would be shocked beyond recovery to hear it applied to herself. She has simply taken a glass or two of wine more than usual, and is consequently not quite herself. That is all I can learn at present. I have spoken to Felice at different times since I found Isabelle would brook no interference on my part, but she says her mistress will have it, and is like one distracted until she gets all she wants; that she uses more and more every week, and is becoming more unreasonable accordingly. This I can see for myself, but as I said, am at a loss how to act.”

Miss Bellmont rocked a moment in silence, then asked:

“Why did you ever consent to her using it? There are other remedies as good that are not harmful.”

“Why did I permit it? Well, the M. D. who prescribed it had absorbed the inside of some half-dozen colleges, medical and otherwise, and tacked a tail to his name as long as from here to Jericho. You can readily see what gross egotism it would have been for me to have questioned his wisdom; besides, in this case I doubt if it would have prevented the present outcome. Isabelle always loved wine, and as a child it was constantly before her, and she was early given a glass or two daily by her father for some fancied ailment. Wine was his cure-all, and Isabelle learned to look upon all this agitation against its use as merely the talk of would-be reformers anxious for notoriety.”

“But what will you do, William? Surely you do not mean for her to continue its use. It will ruin her health entirely; besides what an unpleasant life it will be. Felice is talking of leaving now,” said Miss Bellmont.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Do? What can one do? I have tried, as I said, to induce her to discontinue its use now that her health is improved, but she frankly admits that she likes it and cannot do without it, but at the same time either cannot or will not see the harm it is doing her.”

“Are there not places where such cases are treated? Why not take her to one of them?” said Miss Bellmont.

“She would not go,” said William; “and it would do her no good, since she will not give up the use of wine. It and other beverages, such as claret, champagne and the like, are used at most social functions, and Isabelle would not make herself conspicuous by refusing them even if she could be made to see the harm in them.”

“Well, it seems to me if the physician knew she was already drinking such things daily it was very unwise for him to prescribe more,” said his aunt.

“Maybe he didn’t know it. I didn’t until a short time ago. Who would have dreamed of such a result as this? But I find that her case is by no means the first of the kind. It is no uncommon thing for women to become drunkards, and many such cases can be found in so-called best society.”

“If she could be induced to take some interest in something to occupy her time and mind,” resumed Miss Bellmont, meditatively.

“Suppose you try?” said William. “I have failed, but you might succeed.”

“I fear it will be a difficult case,” said his aunt, reflectively.

“I’m sure of it,” said William, who was not a little relieved to share his burden with his practical, matter-of-fact aunt. “Felice tells me my wife is never without wine now. It is the first thing in the morning and the last at night. I will help you in any way you suggest, but I fear you will find a more difficult case than you ever met in Ragged Row.”

“Well, I will think,” said his aunt. “I confess it has taken me so by surprise I hardly know how to begin. But

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

I believe the only hope lies in interesting her in something and inducing her to give it up gradually. In the meantime I think a real nerve food or tonic could be used to advantage."

"We will see, but I doubt if she will take it," replied William.

"And another thing, my boy, your wife is not to blame for this; she is simply the victim, first, of an unwise father, and second, of a thoughtless physician. I notice you frequently reply to her speeches with impatience or ridicule. You should not do so. Her case requires the utmost patience, and if once you gain her ill-will you can do nothing with her."

"I promised to follow instructions. I shall do so, and now I will leave you to plan operations while I consult a physician," replied William.

Miss Bellmont thought and planned the remainder of the day and far into the night, but without arriving at any very definite conclusion. She would have preferred a dozen such cases in Ragged Row to this one, for there she could instruct her patients in the evils and dangers of alcoholic drinks, provide for their needs and comforts, and give a kind, little lecture if she deemed it necessary. But she realized that in Isabelle's case none of these modes of procedure would apply. Still, next morning after breakfast she entered Isabelle's room dressed for a walk. Isabelle had not been down to breakfast and Miss Bellmont expected to find her in bed. She was much surprised to find her up and preparing to go out, but said composedly:

"As you were not down to breakfast, Isabelle, I brought you a glass of milk. I trust you are better this morning."

"Better? I have not been ill," said Isabelle. "I was probably a little nervous last evening. I do not remember clearly. Felice vexes me so at times."

"Well, you will drink this milk at least, will you not? It is fresh, and I cooled it purposely for you," persisted Miss Bellmont.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"No, thank you, aunt. I don't care for it. I seldom breakfast lately, you know. I feel better with just a glass of wine, and I have taken that."

"But, Isabelle, you have tried wine so long: do you really think it does you good? I wish you would at least try my remedies a few weeks instead. Milk, you know, is nourishing as well as stimulating."

Isabelle smiled in a superior way. "Milk, I believe, is used mostly for babies or invalids, and I am neither. I don't see what is coming over every one. William now has but just gone. He brought some sort of medicine for my nerves, and was quite put out when I refused to take it. One never gets done taking medicine once one begins, and I do not mean to begin. It sometimes makes one really ill if they are not so. I have heard very wise persons say as much."

Miss Bellmont was at a loss how to proceed, but resolved to be more diplomatic. So seating herself in front of a picture Isabelle had begun, but never finished, she said:

"You do look well, Isabelle. Women, I believe, do not age as rapidly as they did a few years ago, and I quite agree with you about indiscriminate medicine taking. Still one may be on the verge of nervous prostration without knowing it, and you admit you are a little nervous. I would take the medicine if I were you; your husband is naturally anxious for you to keep your health and beauty, and nothing is so dangerous to either as nervousness. I have been examining this picture here. I wish you would take time to finish it. The landscape is good, the water and sky natural and those cows look so happy. I would like to give it to a family of children I know."

"Do your people really care for pictures, aunt?" asked Isabelle.

"Indeed they do. They cut every picture from any newspapers that they can procure and paste them on the wall," replied Miss Bellmont.

"You may have the picture, then. It is almost done, and I will finish it tomorrow," said Isabelle.

Emboldened by this small victory, Miss Bellmont continued:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“And there was one other favor I wished to ask. I hoped you would find it convenient to go with me today to visit my people, as you call them. William says you used to visit the slums in New York, and as this is my first experience in such work, I thought you might be able to help me.”

But Isabelle's reply was emphatic.

“No, aunt, I cannot do that. It gives me the horrors yet to recall all the risks I ran—the exposure to contagious disease, besides all the discomfort, and what thanks does one receive? None whatever. Better leave such people to themselves to live their own lives. That's my advice. They don't thank you for your trouble, and you'll be sure to catch something.”

From this decision Isabelle could not be moved, and Miss Bellmont left the room feeling that she had made but little progress toward the solution of the problem.

But that very day William received a letter from an old college friend, Reginald De Forrest, of Georgia, saying that he would be in the city on business a few weeks and would pay him a long promised visit, and Isabelle was at once aroused and interested.

“The De Forrests, you see, are descended from a very proud and ancient French family,” she explained to Miss Bellmont, “and this Reginald is very wealthy, and from what William has told me of him I judge he has inherited all the family pride. His mother is still living, and since he has never married, they live together at their family home, ‘The Magnolias.’ We must plan something extra in the way of entertainments while he is here.”

“I do not think, my dear, you need exert yourself on that score. Reginald, if I mistake not, is a sort of a recluse, and cares but little for society. True, I have not seen him these eight years, but we have kept up a fitful correspondence, and some way his letters have given me that impression. I further surmise that his chief ‘business’ here is to pay his respects to a certain little Italian lady who is not strictly in society.”

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Whom, pray?” asked Isabelle in surprise. “Surely he, a De Forrest, would not be guilty of a mesalliance.”

“Well, that depends on what you call a mesalliance,” replied William.

“The lady in question is a lady of the first water. Reginald became acquainted with her when she was traveling in the South with her father four years ago. He wrote me about it at the time, and I guessed he was much taken with her. Her father died the next year, leaving nothing for the support of his family, consisting of a wife and a lame boy of about ten, and Inez. They have lived here since Mr. Montague’s death, and Inez supports them by teaching music. I may be mistaken, of course, but I believe his visit will end in a wedding. I would not plan any elaborate entertainments if I were you until he arrives, for if my surmises are correct, a quiet dinner, or something of the sort, with a few musicales, will be more suitable.”

Isabelle decided to abide by his judgment, and was glad she had done so when the guest arrived. He was a man of medium height and weight, with blue eyes and light hair, which he had inherited from his Northern mother. His father, who had been dead some time, had been a typical Southerner, descended, as Isabelle has already stated, from an old French family. He had been passionate and impulsive, and Reginald had inherited his father’s disposition.

He arrived on Tuesday, and begged Isabelle to permit him to enjoy his visit in perfect quiet, and when she had suggested at least one ball and reception and a few picnics, he said:

“You will honor and please me most, Mrs. Bellmont, by permitting me to spend my time with yourselves exclusive of visitors. We had a surfeit of Vanity Fair, William and I, when we were young men, and I myself have been out of society so long I should disgrace you.”

So it was settled, and the following Sunday morning William took his friend with him for his customary stroll that of late usually ended at the little church where Paul Rivers occasionally preached.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"I always dodge the aristocracy on Sundays," said William, as they walked along. "But we are fortunate this morning, for I learned yesterday that one Paul Rivers is to preach at a small church across town, and we are certain of something to keep us awake."

And they were not disappointed. The text was: "Whatsoever thou dost, do it for the honor and glory of God." And then there followed a sermon on Christian duty so convincing and powerful that Reginald at least was wonderfully impressed by it.

"An unusually good sermon," he commented, as they walked along.

"It was certainly a striking one," replied William, dryly. It had hit him too squarely in the face to be altogether enjoyable.

"But do you know now, Bellmont," continued Reginald, "if I were a Christian, I should feel it my duty to do all those things. I should look at it this way: Whatever hinders the cause of Christ is an enemy to it, and all such enemies should be mine. It is the half-hearted Christians that do little or nothing that hinder the cause, and not the enemies to it. There are Christians, or rather church members, that you couldn't distinguish from common sinners to save your life."

Reginald had talked on, looking at the various buildings, private and public, and seemed not to expect an answer, when he paused.

William flushed outwardly and smiled inwardly as he remembered that Reginald did not know he was a church member. Reginald had gone to Europe shortly after they left college, and William had not mentioned it in his letters.

"They do most anything anybody else will," continued Reginald. "Chew, smoke, bet, play cards, drink and cheat their neighbors in a horse trade."

"Come, now, Reginald, don't you think you are a little hard on the church folk?" asked William. "Why don't you praise the good ones instead of pouring out your wrath upon the wobbley ones?"

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Because, not being a Christian myself, I find pleasure in comparing myself with those who are, and in my own estimation at least I seldom come off second best,” replied Reginald, smiling. “It is much easier to say what others should do than it is to do the doing one’s self.”

“But what is it the apostle says about people comparing themselves by themselves not being wise?” asked William.

“Don’t know, I’m sure, and now, Bellmont, don’t turn preacher; one sermon a day is quite enough for respectability. One might think you a churchman yourself the way you take a fellow up,” replied Reginald.

“Well, since you’ve mentioned it, I believe one of our fashionable institutions up town does claim me as a member, though I so seldom attend I wonder they do not mark me off entirely.”

“Why, I had no idea you were a Christian,” said Reginald in surprise.

“I dare say you didn’t,” replied William, dryly, “and to tell the truth, I have often had serious doubts on the subject myself; but that, according to our learned pastor, is a matter of little consequence. If he can only get your name on his church book you are safe. Out of reach of the devil and the other denominations, you understand? You need not deny yourself worldly pleasures either. Christians nowadays are not expected to be martyrs, and in short, Reginald, old boy, I’m surprised that you do not embrace so glorious a religion and so insure your soul’s salvation.”

Reginald looked puzzled and surprised. William’s voice and look had been half comic and half sarcastic.

“Of course, Will, I don’t pretend to understand more than half you have said or mean; but I do know you were not always so pessimistic concerning these things. You used to have very high ideals of duty, I remember, and have kept me out of many a scrape. Does the possession of Christianity lessen its attractiveness for the possessor? I believe I have heard it said that worldly things lose their value as

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

soon as possessed, but I did not know the same law applied to Christianity."

"I had not thought of it in that light," replied William. "But perhaps that is truer than we think. We become so thoroughly disgusted with ourselves because we cannot be the models we hoped to be that perhaps we unconsciously blame Christianity for it. True, I once had very exalted ideas of life, my duty and so on. But theory and practice, I soon learned, are two very different things, and my good resolutions were soon scattered to the four winds. Since then I have been little more than a bit of drift-wood buffeted by wind and wave. But come, Reginald, I shall confess no more of my iniquities today. How are you and the little Italian coming on? I expected wedding cards ere this."

Reginald changed color and hesitated a moment, then said:

"And you should have had them could I have had my way, but Inez, for some unaccountable reason, insists she will never marry. I thought at first it was only shyness, since she had admitted she really cared for me; but yesterday she seemed so distressed and begged me not to try to see her again, saying it would be much better for us both, that I hardly know what to think; but I shall not give her up yet. Of course, she is at present her mother's and brother's only support; but I have explained to her that I should consider it my privilege to amply provide for them. But 'faint heart ne'er won fair lady,' you know, and I feel that I shall win in the end."

"Sounds like a romance," said William, "and I wish you luck, I'm sure. Perhaps now, if you'll hang a horse-shoe over your door, carry a four-leaf clover in your pocket, and turn around three times before getting in bed to-night, she will say 'yes' tomorrow."

Whether Reginald tried all these projects or not we cannot say, but he came in the next evening looking so radiant that William exclaimed:

"The charms worked, did they?"

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Hang your charms. But what of all things do you suppose my little Inez was fretting herself about?"

"Waiting to see if some more desirable suitor would not declare himself," said William, thinking his friend's ardor needed cooling.

"No, nothing of the sort," replied Reginald, shortly.

"Well, what was it, then? I'm not next all the feminine devices for keeping a fellow in hot water, and should not guess in a year," said William.

"I've a mind not to tell you, since you're such a bear, but suppose I can afford to be generous today. It was simply that her father had been a drunkard, that he had inherited the taste from his father and a long line of ancestors who seem to have had a penchant for the cup, and Inez fears she herself has inherited the taste. Now could anything be more absurd? She was actually afraid that she would some time become a drunkard, or if she should have children, they might be drunkards. I'll tell you, it took all my persuasive powers to overcome her prejudice on the subject. But she yielded at last, and for fear she should change her mind I insisted upon an early wedding. We are to be married in a fortnight, and you will receive a wedding card forthwith. Why don't you congratulate me?"

William had become strangely silent and sober, but said after an awkward pause:

"I hardly know whether to do so or not. Do you think you have acted wisely? What if Miss Montague's fears should be realized? It would kill your mother and wreck your life. It seems to me, Reginald, you would better have considered well before persuading Miss Montague into this engagement against her better judgment. Think of your family pride."

"I trust, William, you are not such a dolt as to think there is really any danger," said Reginald, impatiently. "I gave you credit for more sense. The idea of any one as delicately beautiful and refined as Inez ever becoming a common drunkard is preposterous. Of course, I should

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

have preferred that her father had not been a drunkard, but my family pride, as you call it, is not of the sort that visits the parent's sins upon the child, and I love Inez none the less for it. As for my mother, she is anxious to see me married, and we have long understood each other on the subject. Her only request is that I should marry a lady, and Inez is that. My mother does not know of my present intentions, however, and as her health will not admit of her coming north at this time of the year, I shall not inform her of them, but surprise and please her shortly by presenting her with a daughter of which any mother might be proud. And now, old fellow, it only remains for you to lay aside that gloomy mask and deport yourself as I have a right to expect my best friend to do, under the circumstances, to make my happiness complete."

"You are determined, then? Nothing can change your intentions?" asked William.

"Certainly not," replied Reginald, decidedly. "It is too late now, even if I wished to do so, which I do not. I shall marry Inez in two weeks, either with your consent or without."

William smiled.

"Of course you think it's none of my business, and I presume you are old enough to be your own judge. Yet discretion does not always come with age. But I will cease my croaking and wish you all happiness," and William extended his hand, which Reginald shook heartily.

The two weeks passed rapidly, and the wedding day dawned clear and bright. Neither of the friends had again referred to what Reginald insisted upon thinking Inez's groundless fears, and as Bellmont saw more of her himself his own fears gradually left him. Isabelle had insisted upon a dinner party and the musicales, and Bellmont had studied his friend's fiancée closely on these occasions, but was forced to agree with Reginald that it was preposterous to imagine so beautiful and intelligent a creature a common drunkard. It was to be a very quiet wedding by Inez's and her mother's request, only the Bellmonts and two or

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

three of the bride's most intimate friends being invited; but Reginald had insisted upon a white satin gown for his bride and a sumptuous wedding breakfast.

Reginald and the Bellmonts were the first to arrive, and they found Inez dressed and waiting in an upper room of the little cottage. The other guests soon arrived, and the words were spoken that bound Reginald and Inez together for life. He had solemnly promised to love, cherish and protect her, while she had promised to love and honor him. Alas, how lightly such vows are taken! How thoughtlessly broken!

Reginald De Forrest broke one of his promises on the way to the breakfast room.

"Reginald," Inez had whispered, as they passed out together, "the man from whom you ordered the breakfast has sent up wine. I meant never to taste it, but if I do not, it will be remarked upon. What shall I do?"

"Drink it, of course," he replied, gaily. "It certainly would look odd for you to refuse to drink to the health and happiness of the bride and groom."

Why did he not remember his promise to protect and cherish her, and bid her not to drink it if she feared to do so? In so doing he would have been protecting her against her own weakness, which is really one's greatest enemy.

But Reginald was not thinking of his marriage vows, nor yet of Inez's supposed weakness. He had put that out of his mind forever, he told himself; it was only a childish fancy, though he respected her for having told him of it. She would drink her wine as did the others and think no more about it. To advise her not to do so would be equal to admitting the possibility of her avowed weakness, and this he would never do.

William watched her as closely as possible without attracting attention. He thought she looked very pale when the toasts were mentioned, and there was a vague, undefinable look in the beautiful dark eyes as though she feared something, yet scarcely knew what. She glanced question-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ingly at Reginald, who gave her a smiling nod as he raised his own glass to his lips. She followed his example, sipping timidly at first and then drinking the entire glass. As they arose from the table, Reginald said:

“And now, Mrs. De Forrest, just one hour until train time—a half-hour to dress and the other half to drive to the train. Think you will be ready? I will wait for you in the parlor.”

Inez' mother left the dining-room with her, and her friends followed them. Isabelle and Miss Bellmont remained in the dining-room admiring an old Italian painting which the latter was trying to persuade Isabelle to copy. So William and Reginald were alone.

“And now, old boy, I can't begin to tell you how happy I am,” began Reginald. “And I mean that this shall be the beginning of a new life for me indeed. I mean to be a thorough Christian man first; after that I shall do my duty morally, socially and politically as fast as I can learn what it is.”

“I wish you success, I'm sure,” replied William. “I've been but a poor stick myself, but I believe you could do something.”

“I shall try at least,” replied Reginald. “I believe our country's safety lies in wresting from unprincipled politicians the tremendous power they have gained and then keeping our government in the hands of honest men who will think of something besides their own gain. Our politics of to-day are a disgrace to us, and I mean to try what one man can do to better them, and I strongly advise you to bestir yourself in like manner. We have little else to do, and if we and others like us would devote our time to solving a few of the problems that confront us as a nation we might do much toward improvement, whereas if we do nothing but drift and idle, our government will soon be at the mercy of any scheming person or persons who may wish to use it for their own interests. I grant you will find much at first to disgust you, but I believe, by judicious management, one can get through a campaign or so without

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

losing his self-respect," and he smiled, for he knew his friend entertained serious doubts on the subject. "He can gradually train public opinion as he goes until it will expect and demand thoroughly honest statesmen as leaders instead of the political boss of today. But I am lecturing at great length, and we should be started in five minutes. I wonder what is keeping Inez. She is bidding her mother and brother good-bye, I suppose. Poor child, she dreads leaving them. I wished them to go with us; there is room enough at the Magnolias for a dozen families, and mother would have had it so, but Mrs. Montague preferred staying here, so I bought this little nest for her and settled a comfortable income upon her—"

He was interrupted by Mrs. Montague coming hastily into the room. She was very pale, and Reginald thinking her agitation due to the parting from her daughter, said:

"What is it, Mrs. Montague? Is Inez ready? I shall bring her back often, and you and brother Jean shall visit us at the Magnolias. My mother will be pleased to have you as long as you care to stay, and we will all be so happy. I—"

"Hush! Mr. De Forrest, do hush!" said the agitated mother, placing a hand on the chair for support, for she seemed unable to stand.

"Inez cannot go today. She is—ill."

"Ill! Inez ill!" cried Reginald in alarm. "What can ail her? Shall I call a physician?"

"Stay; she needs no physician at present. Come with me a moment," said Mrs. Montague, and he followed her from the room.

"Oh, Reginald, how can I tell you?" said Mrs. Montague. "Why did you insist upon Inez taking wine at breakfast? While I was out of the room she sent for more and is now unable to leave her bed. Oh, my poor child!" and the mother buried her face in her hands.

Reginald stood dumb and motionless for some moments but dimly realizing the awful significance of the speaker's words. Finally he spoke, but his voice sounded hollow and far away.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Will you tell me just what you mean, mother?” he asked, giving her the name for the first time.

“Oh, can you not guess? Inez, as she told you before, inherited the taste from her father; the glass of wine at breakfast aroused it and she insisted upon having more. I was not in the room at the time, and one of the girls brought it to her. I deceived them in thinking she is ill and sent them away, and Inez is now alone, but she is unconscious.”

“I will go to her anyway. Perhaps she will know me, and, mother, do not weep; all may yet be well. Inez will survive this, then I will guard her carefully in the future.”

Thus he spoke, endeavoring to soothe the distracted mother; but his own heart felt like lead as he mounted the stairway followed by Mrs. Montague.

It would be impossible to describe the wretched young man's feelings as he gazed upon his beautiful bride. Pity, remorse, anger and wounded pride all surged through his heart so rapidly that it was impossible to say which was predominant.

She was lying on a low couch still in her wedding garments. She was only half conscious, and babbled some unintelligible words when he spoke to her, and he turned away sick at heart. Youth is ever hopeful, however, and as he thought the matter over he resolved to put on a brave face for the mother's sake at least. Inez was not to blame, he argued. She had told him of this, and asked him to leave her, but he had refused to do so. Then in the face of this he had ordered wine and requested her to drink it. So it was his own fault entirely. He would bear with her through this—this—he could find no word to suit him—then he would protect her from herself ever after. Turning again to Mrs. Montague, he said:

“It is true. I alone am to blame for this, and I wish to do all I can to make atonement. What can I do? Can not something be done to arouse her from this—unconsciousness?”

Mrs. Montague gave him a grateful look. She had feared

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

her daughter's condition might so shock the proud young man that he would turn from her in disgust.

"There is nothing you can do," she said. "You had best leave her with me; she may sleep this off tonight and be able to go in the morning," and Reginald descended to the parlor.

William had guessed the cause of the bride's illness, but only said as Reginald entered:

"I informed the ladies of Mrs. De Forrest's illness and sent them home with the carriage, but have remained myself to render any aid you may need." He was moved to pity by the white, wan face of his friend, but wisely refrained from commenting upon it.

"There is nothing to do, it seems. Of course, you know or guess the cause of her illness. I feel as if every one knew, though Mrs. Montague assures me they do not. It is my own fault. She took the wine to please me and is not to blame. I shall use more sense another time, and guard her against this weakness instead of thrusting her into danger, as I did today. No, she is not to blame; it is my own fault," he repeated, as though he would impress this fact firmly upon his own mind.

"The fact that she took the wine because you asked her to do so, and not because she wanted it, is encouraging," said William, thinking of Isabelle's case. "If she can let it alone of herself she will be in little danger hereafter."

"Perhaps not," replied Reginald.

"Will you go home with me or remain here?" asked William, doubtfully.

"My place is here, I believe," was the reply, and as Reginald did not seem inclined to talk or to desire company, William soon took his leave, saying he would drop in occasionally to inquire after them. To his wife's and aunt's inquiries he replied that Mrs. De Forrest was resting and would probably be able to make the start for her southern home on the morrow.

But she was not, and when William called next morning

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

he was alarmed at his friend's haggard face. He seemed to have aged ten years in that one day and night.

"Bellmont, old boy, I can't stand this much longer. It will kill me or drive me mad," said he.

"Is she no better, then?" asked William.

"No, she is worse. She is almost raving when we refuse her the wine, and lies in a sort of stupor when she has it."

"Perhaps if you could get her away, change of scene would arouse her, and once in her new home she might forget," suggested William, desperately.

"Take a drunken wife to my mother? Never!" said Reginald. "As you said, it would kill her. I wrote her today of my marriage, saying simply that my wife was ill and that we would come home as soon as she was able to travel; but I will never burden my mother **with** my blunders."

William was at a loss how to assist or console his friend. Once he thought of explaining the facts to his aunt, but he remembered her helplessness and seeming failure with Isabelle; besides, this was not his own trouble, and he hesitated to betray another's secret.

"Is there nothing I can do at all?" he asked. "I feel like a poor friend, Reginald, to be doing nothing while you are in such trouble."

"There is nothing you can do," Reginald replied, wearily. "Only do all you can to keep this quiet. I don't want my mother to learn it from the newspapers."

So three days passed, and it was the fifth day after the wedding when William was summoned by telephone to Mrs. Montague's. That lady met him in the hall in a state of suppressed excitement and fear.

"I called you because you are Reginald's friend and already aware of our misfortune. The door to Inez' room is locked on the inside, and I can neither open it or arouse any one."

"Is Reginald in the room?" asked William.

"He was when I left it. He has acted so strangely the last two days and nights, and last night Inez was worse

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

than ever. I stayed with her all night and he paced the hall outside the door. I do not think he has slept at all the last three days and nights. This afternoon he came in and insisted upon staying with Inez while I rested. He seemed more cheerful than usual, and I left them and went to my room. I must have slept an hour or so, when I awoke with a start. I am not sure that I heard a sound. I thought I did, but when I went to Inez' room I could get no response from within, and I called you at once. I would have called a policeman, but he is so sensitive. Do you think it possible he has been drinking? Persons are sometimes driven to it by grief."

William scarcely knew what he thought; he had not supposed Reginald one to drown trouble in drink.

"The door must be opened at once," he said.

"So I thought," said Mrs. Montague, as she led the way. "You will have to force it," she added, pausing before the closed door.

William applied his ear to the keyhole and listened a moment in silence. But there came no sound, not even of heavy breathing. He turned very pale, and, looking at Mrs. Montague, he said:

"Will you not go to your room, madam, while I open the door?"

"Oh, what do you think?" she exclaimed, her eyes wide with a vague dread.

"I do not know what to think," he replied, speaking calmly with an effort; "but it is very quiet within."

"Be quick then and open the door. I can bear anything but this awful suspense. I shall remain here," she replied. And seeing she would not go, William applied his shoulder to the door and wrenched it from its fastenings.

One glance confirmed his worst fears, and he tried to think how to soften the blow for the mother.

"Are you strong? Can you bear it? It is the very worst I fear."

"Oh, I can bear anything. Let me go in at once," was

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

the reply, and William stepped aside and allowed her to enter.

She rushed to the couch where Inez lay, spots of blood showing on her white dress, and a few drops still trickling down and dropping into a small pool on the floor. Mrs. Montague seized the hand that was still warm and felt for the pulse.

"Oh! She's dead. She's dead," and the grief-stricken mother fell upon her knees by the couch.

William turned his attention to Reginald. He was lying across the bed, where he had evidently fallen. There was a wound just above the right ear, and a revolver in his right hand with two empty shells told the story.

"He is dead also," said William.

"Oh, my poor child, what a fearful ending to what promised to be such a happy life! Why could he not have left her as she requested him to do? We were happy and living comfortably. What right had he to rob me of my child thus?" sobbed she.

"My dear madam, it was a most horrible deed for a man to do. That no one can deny, and I cannot believe Reginald De Forrest would have been guilty of so great a crime had he been in possession of his faculties. I believe he was crazed with grief and disappointment. His was a proud nature, and you and I cannot understand how he suffered from this blow. To be sure, it was his own fault, and he realized it at first. I knew he felt the blow as few persons could, but believe me, madam, had I had the remotest idea of such an ending as this I should not have left him a moment."

"I would not judge the dead," replied Mrs. Montague, more calmly; "but it seems cruel and unjust to me that my child should be stricken down in the very bloom of her life by the hand that above all others should have been her protection."

"We must call a physician and notify the authorities," said William, not wishing to argue; "and, Mrs. Montague, it will do no good to have your daughter's unfortunate

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

weakness known. The verdict, of course, will be murder and suicide committed by Reginald, but if we are silent the cause will doubtless be ascribed to despondency over his bride's illness."

William was trying to proceed as he thought his friend would have wished and the mother did not oppose him; and so the dreadful facts with this one exception were public property. The awful news was flashed over the wires to the mother who was anxiously awaiting the arrival of her son and his bride, and the news boys were crying it in the streets.

An answer came during the day from Reginald's mother requesting his remains to be sent to her and Mrs. Montague wished Inez' grave to be near her. So they were buried, one beneath the frozen, snow-clad earth of a northern state and the other in sunny Georgia, where the birds still sang and the flowers were still blooming. William accompanied his friend's remains to their last resting place and at the mother's earnest request told her the whole pitiful story. He remained with her two days. On his return he found that the occurrence was already forgotten. Inez' pupils had a new music teacher and Fourth Street church another organist.

How little one is missed, after all, he thought. One dies or is killed; his life, manner of death and funeral arrangements are written up, and gossiped about; if he has a family skeleton, all the better; it will serve to keep him in remembrance a few days longer. Then he is forgotten. "Verily man fleeth as a shadow and continueth not."

But there were two persons at least who did not forget Inez so readily: her mother and lame brother mourned for her many days and grieved bitterly over the manner of her death. And in a southern mansion a lonely widow mourns her only child.

"Oh, my boy! My boy! Could my poor life have saved you from this, how gladly I would have given it. Or if your death had been such that I might hope to meet you soon. But, oh God, I fear we are parted forever."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

But what matters it if hearts do break; if lives are blighted and ruined; if souls are doomed forever? Because it has long been the custom to use wine or other like drinks at table we must continue to do so just as the Chinese bind their feet or the Indian disfigures and tortures himself; slaves, all of us alike, to that all-powerful ruler, custom, and we will not deviate therefrom though our refusal to do so may lure our most beloved friends to ruin.

Reginald's mother had always served wine at dinner; secure in her own son's safety from its evil results she little thought that he, following her example, might accomplish his ruin through the weakness of another.

William after much thought decided to inform Isabelle of the real cause of the tragedy. She had not indulged to excess—if there can be indulgence in wine without excess—since the afternoon Miss Bellmont first learned of her appetite for it. Perhaps if she learned that wine was the cause of their friend's grief and death, she might be led to see the danger in its use and strive to overcome her taste for it.

So he told her how Reginald had ordered wine because from his own training he thought a wedding feast incomplete without it. How he had tempted Inez to drink it and the result, adding:

“So you see, my dear, the ruin that one glass of wine wrought, and while you and I are in no such danger, the physician I consulted the day I brought that medicine said unless you gave up the use of stimulants your health would be ruined, and you would become a veritable slave to the habit. I thought the matter over and decided it were best you should know your danger as it is a matter you must act upon and fight out yourself. It will doubtless cause you a severe struggle at first, but I trust your own good judgment will show you the necessity of it, for your own sake as well as mine.”

Isabelle was angry at first, then surprised. It was the first time her husband had ever talked to her so. She was accustomed to his ridicule or sarcasm; but this calm re-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

quest and his evident assurance that she would heed it was something new and she was not sure whether she liked it or not, and only said by way of reply:

“But suppose I can’t let it alone?”

“I am sure you can when you realize how entirely our happiness depends upon it. You must see that you are degenerating morally, while I am becoming a pessimistic skeptic. And another thing, Isabelle, the wine we keep in the house and on the table is a constant menace and temptation to the servants. You dismissed two, you remember, for drunkenness just before aunt came. On inquiry I found they had never been drunk before. Is it just to keep such temptations before them and then discharge them for yielding to them? Then who can say: we may have friends to whom wine is dangerous. I do not feel that I can sit at the table again where it is served without recalling Reginald’s awful death. Think the matter over and see if we cannot agree upon some changes.”

“Does aunt know?” she asked.

“No. I have told no one but you. Mrs. Montague and Reginald’s mother are the only others that are aware of the real cause of the crime. I felt Reginald would have had it so.”

Isabelle was very quiet for several days and much to Miss Bellmont’s gratification she informed her she would try her milk cure. She also began taking the medicine William had brought; at the end of a week she surprised them both one morning at breakfast by saying:

“William you may have our wine cellar emptied. Since you and aunt do not use wine we will not keep it. I find it harder to cure myself of its use than I thought, but if I cannot do so I shall keep a little for my own use in my room under lock and key.”

“Are you really trying to quit it?” asked Miss Bellmont, in surprise.

“Yes. I could not fail to see through your schemes to interest me that day, though I did not realize my danger at the time. Then William says he cannot endure sitting

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

at the table where it is, since—since it is such a temptation to the servants, and the physician says I must quit its use or become a common drunkard.” And the beautiful lips trembled pitifully.

There was a suspicion of moisture in Bellmont’s eyes and he only looked his gratitude.

“But you are stronger now that you realize your danger,” said Miss Bellmont, “and we will help you in any way we can. What will you do with all that stuff in the cellar, William?”

“I have been trying to think,” said he. “If I give it away or sell it, its power for mischief will not be diminished. What do you say to burying it, Isabelle?”

“It seems to me the only consistent way to get rid of it is to destroy it,” she answered.

So the man from the stable came when breakfast was finished and dug a hole in the back yard and James, the butler, carried the costly bottles of wine from the cellar and broke them one by one over the cave while Isabelle herself stood by.

And she found that her act and the assurance of her husband’s and Miss Bellmont’s sympathy greatly strengthened her, and she had no need to keep wine in her room as she feared, but put it from her house that day forever.

CHAPTER X.

Since the coming of cool weather Miss Bellmont had found more work to do among the poor, and as Isabelle now took much of the household management upon herself, the older woman had more time to devote to this work. She had organized a sewing class among the girls from nine to twelve, whose mothers were away from home most of the time at work, and taught them to cut and make pants and shirts for their brothers and plain dresses and aprons for themselves and younger sisters. She also taught them a few simple laws of health and cleanliness, of which she found most of them sadly ignorant. Many of these girls worked at some factory or shop to help eke out a meager income and had but little time for personal improvement. But the papers and books selected for them by their benefactress were in most cases read with interest.

She managed to meet the mothers, too, occasionally, and helped them to solve many a problem in economy and home improvement that they were either too careless, tired or utterly discouraged to think out for themselves when their day's work was done.

She was frequently disgusted by the glaring lack of principle and common decency that she met almost daily, but she schooled herself to see only in her fellow creatures an immortal soul for which her Lord had died and to persevere in her attempts to help them.

Another thought she strove to keep constantly before her: if the wickedness and weakness of these people were so repulsive to her, how must her own shortcomings look in the sight of an all-wise and perfect God? This thought served to keep her humble and to temper many a speech that would otherwise have been sharp, and therefore disastrous to the desired results.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Late one afternoon as she was returning from a visit with her sewing class she stopped to inquire after a family one of the girls had told her was in need of someone's assistance, and as she mounted the dark, rickety stairway she wondered how children could exist in such dark, not infrequently ill-smelling, holes.

She passed along the dim corridor until she came to the right number when she paused and knocked. Once, twice, thrice, but there was no response though she was sure she had heard childish voices within, but after her first knock all became silent as the tomb.

Presently a door was opened on the opposite side of the hall and a woman put her head out and said:

"Mis Reed ain't home, an' she allers locks the boys in when she's gone."

Miss Bellmont turned and faced this rather slatternly specimen of her sex, and inquired:

"She is away at work, I suppose, and will be home soon?"

The woman gave a short laugh as she replied:

"Work! Well, that's a good'n. I've lived here six months and I ain't knowed 'em to work a lick."

"Why, how do they live then?" asked Miss Bellmont, in surprise.

"Well, they say he *lifts* things once in a while," was the reply.

"Lifts things? Well, is not that work? Does he not receive pay for it?" asked Miss Bellmont.

Again the woman laughed.

"You don't tumble, I reckon. I mean he swipes things."

"Swipes things," repeated Miss Bellmont, more puzzled than ever, and trying in vain to recall Webster's definition of the word "swipes."

"Well, steals 'em then," said the woman, seeing that Miss Bellmont was ignorant of the lingo of the day.

"Oh, you mean he steals for a living."

"He steals fer money ter buy grog with. They don't have much o' a livin'. The woman used to work, the wom-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

an that lived here afore I came told me that two or three years ago she used to work an' was good to the children, but since her baby died she's been drinkin'."

"That was a poor excuse for drinking, I should think," said Miss Bellmont.

"You'd think so, I reckon, but you don't know how she's lived. He never was no 'count, I guess, 'n drinks all the time an' abused her an' the children. The baby was a girl a little more'n a year old. It was allers puny but she had to leave it to work, they say, an' John, that's the oldest boy, took care of it. He never did furnish her nothin' an' when it took sick she had to go ahead jist the same. Wall, the baby cried most o' the time of course, an' Reed he said 'twant nothin', but crossness an' he'd swear an' beat it an' finally one night he said he wasn't goin' to be pestered with it so he couldn't sleep an' he took it out there to a' empty room clear away from his an' put it down on the bare floor an' left it. They heerd Mis Reed cryin' an' beggin' him to let her git it, tellin' him 'twas too cold fer it out there, but he made her go back in the room an' he locked the door an' took out the key. Reed's danger's, they say, an' everybody was afeard to bother him. After he was asleep Mis Reed took the key out o' his pocket an' got the baby an' brought it in here, the woman told me, but it was blue with cold, an' so hoarse it couldn't cry an' died afore mornin' Mis Reed took to drinkin' right away an' now she's nearly as bad as he is; says she can hear her baby cryin' all the time only when she's drinkin'. But how I've talked, you must be tired standin'. Won't you come in my room an' rest a mite? Hist! There comes Mis Reed now an' she's nearly dead drunk. Come in till she gits by then you can go in an' see her an' the boys."

Miss Bellmont did as requested and found herself in a small, but comparatively neat room, which was evidently bedroom, kitchen, sitting-room and laundry combined.

"Here take this chair; tain't none too clean fer Trottie's crumbed her cracker on it," said the woman brushing the proffered chair with her apron.

Miss Bellmont could not so soon forget the shocking tale of cruelty she had just heard and asked:

“Is there no one to look after such things? Such parents should not be permitted to keep their children.”

“Well, the perlice takes up some of ’em once in a while, but I reckon they don’t allers know. Then there is a man that comes over here once in a while an’ sees into sich things a little. His name’s Paul Rivers, but I guess he’s kep busy on tother side. I’ll tell ye bad men’s afeard o’ him, an’ well they may be.”

“I have heard of him,” replied Miss Bellmont, “but how do you live? You have a husband, I suppose.”

“Yes, an’ a good one too,” replied the woman. “He don’t drink neither, though he’s had discouragement enuf if there’s anything in that.”

Miss Bellmont looked her inquiry and the woman continued:

“When my first baby was born I had a long sick spell an’ they told me to drink whisky an’ sich to make me stronger, an’ when I got well I couldn’t do without it an’ got so’s I’d get plum drunk. My baby didn’t live but one day. I’ve thought if it had I’d a’ been different. My sickness put us in debt some but we’d a’ got along if it hadn’t a’ been fer my drinkin’. It wasn’t so much what I spent fer it as ’twas I didn’t manage an’ save other ways like I allers had done. We’d bought a little place of our own an’ had it most paid fer, but as we couldn’t get a head any, Jim had to sell it to pay the debts, an’ we come here. Trottie was born though before we sold the place. She’s over a year old an’ I’m tryin’ hard to do without rum, an’ don’t often give up to drink it. We’re gettin’ ahead agin an’ Jim says if we keep on we’ll be able to buy another place by spring, an’ I’ll be so glad. It seems awful to raise Trottie in a place like this. I’ve washed today; that’s why I’m so untidy. I’ll slick up a mite afore Jim comes.”

“Yes, and as it is growing late, I must be hurrying. I hope you will overcome your craving for drink. The Lord

helps those who try to help themselves. Here is a sandwich for Trottie. I will leave the others for the little Reed boys."

"Well, hurry in then an' give it to 'em while he's gone, fer if he happens ter come in, precious little of it they'll git."

"Why, he wouldn't take food that had been given his hungry children?" asked Miss Bellmont, in astonishment.

"That's jist what he'd do. The oldest boy's been ailin' fer some time an' the other day I took him a dish o' soup an' what did ole Reed do but gobble the most of it hisself. She ain't quite that bad, but they don't allow the boys out o' that room an' allers leave the door locked. Sometimes they're there all day by theirselves with little or nothin' ter eat, but I'm keepin' ye."

Miss Bellmont took up her basket and again knocked at the door of the Reed's. This time it was opened by a boy of eight or ten years, who looked pale and sickly. Another small boy of five or six years was sitting upon the floor, sobbing quietly. He looked wonderingly up as Miss Bellmont entered. The older child glanced nervously at the bed where the mother lay, apparently sleeping.

"Is your mother ill, boys?" asked Miss Bellmont.

"No'm," briefly replied the oldest boy, his face coloring painfully.

Miss Bellmont's heart bled for the worse than motherless children. She coaxed them to her and gave them the sandwiches, saying:

"Eat all you want now and save the rest for breakfast, and now you'll tell me your names, won't you, and what you do here?"

"My name's Robbie Reed, an' he's my brother, John," replied the younger child, who seemed the more talkative of the two. "An' we was so hungry all day, an' when ma come an' didn't fetch us nothin', I cried. John's sick an' he don't git hungry as I do."

"Have you been sick long?" asked Miss Bellmont, who noticed that he ate only a few bites of the food.

"I guess I'm not very sick," replied John, hesitatingly.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"I'm just weak an' can't eat like Robbie."

She took the child on her lap and felt his hands and forehead. They were hot and feverish.

"Is there anything you want, John? Anything you could eat or drink? I'm coming back tomorrow to see you. What shall I bring?"

"I could drink some cold water, ma'am," he replied, timidly.

Miss Bellmont glanced around the room. Its only furniture was a bedstead, a stove and one chair; a box served for a table and on it sat a bucket that contained a little water, but it had evidently been there for some time.

"Where do you get water, John?" she asked.

"At the well down stairs; but we daren't go."

Miss Bellmont placed the child in the chair and took the bucket, which held only a half gallon, and went for the water herself.

Both John and Robbie drank greedily. It was now growing dark and Miss Bellmont after again saying she would come on the morrow hurried away.

After Miss Bellmont went away the little Reed boys ate more heartily and drank most of the water before they went to their bed, which was only a pile of rags, and none too clean at that.

Robbie was soon fast asleep but his brother could not sleep. His head had been aching all day and a slow fever was gradually consuming him. Perhaps he had eaten too heartily after his long fast or had taken too much of the stagnant water during the day. His fever grew higher as the night advanced and his head seemed ready to burst as he tossed about on his bed of rags. If he only dared wake his mother and ask her to bring him a cold drink. He could remember when he would have done just that. But now he only tried to be as quiet as possible in his suffering for fear of disturbing her, for he knew why she slept so soundly; he also knew how cross she would be if disturbed.

But how he craved a cold drink! At last he crept slowly

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

toward the box where the water was, but found he was unable to raise himself sufficiently to reach the water and was obliged to creep back without it.

He did not know how long he lay there moaning softly, when his mother awoke. She lit a smoky lamp and gazed stupidly around. Seeing the remains of the boys' supper on the box, she began eating it.

John waited until she had finished before he said:

"Ma, I'm so sick; please bring me a drink."

Whether Mrs. Reed's heart was touched by the plaintive appeal or whether the food, which was better than she had tasted for a long time, served to sweeten her temper, we cannot say, but John was please to hear her reply:

"Wall, I reckon; but there ain't much here. Drink it an' I'll git some more. I swan I 'bleve you've done got a fever." She brought a pillow from the bed and placed it under John's head. "I'll not be long," she said, as she left the room.

Surely she meant to keep her word to the sick child. But downstairs she found a group of men and women talking in low, excited tones. Her husband was in the group and she joined it. They were discussing the success of a recent robbery and dividing the spoils, and planning another that they all agreed would be more profitable. Her husband handed her a bill, saying:

"Here, old girl, take this and drink to our success to-night."

It was the first money he had given her in years and nothing loath she proceeded to do his bidding. A grog shop was right by the stairway and—well, poor John waited and moaned and begged for water that night until Robbie awoke.

"What's you cryin' fer, John? You hungry?" he asked, sleepily rubbing his eyes.

"Oh, no. I want a drink so bad."

Robbie who was getting wider awake arose and started toward the box, whereon usually sat the bucket, but not seeing it, he paused and looked doubtfully around.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Oh, it ain't there, Robbie. Ma took it and said she'd be back right away, but she's been gone so long."

Robbie glanced at the bed where his mother had been and then came slowly back and sat down beside his suffering brother. The lamp light flickered fitfully and made ghostly shadows on the walls, but no thought of fear entered Robbie's mind. He was consumed with a desire to relieve John and trying to think how he could get him the water. He was shivering with cold, but gave no thought to his own comfort. John was all he had in the world to love or to love him. John could remember how their mother used to love them and tell them Bible stories and rocked and sang to them. But Robbie could not, and John had told him the stories when he was restless or hungry and would sing to him and try in his childish way to make up to him what he missed in the mother. Robbie, himself, experienced no feelings for his parents, except fear when they came, and relief when they went away.

So John was indeed all he had to look to for love or sympathy and what wonder that he was anxious to satisfy his thirst if it were possible. He thought earnestly for some moments and then said doubtfully:

"Mebbe I could go find her er git the water."

"She wouldn't like it, an' ain't the door locked?"

Robbie hastened to examine the door.

"No, tain't locked," he cried, in delight; "an' I'm goin' anyway. Mebbe I can find some water." And Robbie went out with no very definite idea where his search should begin.

First he went to the public well, where his mother got water. Of course she was not there. Oh, if he could only draw the water. But the buckets were large and heavy and the well so deep and dark. He shrank hastily back after one glance into its terrifying depths.

The night was dark, cold and stormy. An occasional street lamp and a light snow that was falling saved the night from utter darkness, but the wind was becoming stronger and colder every moment. Robbie clung to the

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

well curb and gazed eagerly at every passer-by in the hopes of seeing father or mother. He knew they would be angry but he believed they would take John a drink, and this was his sole thought now. But he saw no familiar face, and every one was in such a hurry. After standing thus for some time in bewildered dismay, it occurred to him to go to the grog shop, where he knew both father and mother spent much of their time, and inquire for them. So he entered the shop where, but a few hours before, his mother had been, but she was not to be seen. There was but one man in the room and accosting him Robbie asked:

"Ain't my pa or ma been here? John wants some water an' I can't find pa or ma."

"Well, they ain't here; so be off. Don't want no sich kids aroun'," was the gruff reply.

"But they come here don't they? I'm Robbie Reed, an' I have to get some water——"

"I say I don't know nothin' 'bout yer pa an' ma, 'cept-in' they owe me more'n they'll ever pay," said the man, more roughly. But Robbie was used to rough talk and persisted:

"But I want to find ma so bad, 'cause John's sick an' I can't git the water. If I could——"

"——now will ye go!" exclaimed the man, giving poor Robbie a kick that made him stagger.

Catching to the door he managed to get out of the room and climbed up the stairway a few steps and sat down to try to decide what he should do next. He would not think of going back to John without the water, yet his recent rebuff made him more fearful of asking assistance, and he knew but little of his surroundings, not having been often permitted to leave the room.

At last what seemed a happy thought came to the baby mind, and he brushed the tears, caused by the cruel kick, from his eyes and arose. He would find the good lady who brought their supper. Surely she would get John a drink.

He slipped cautiously by the grog shop and out into

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

the night, pausing a moment to look about him and decide which way he should go, he started off toward what he supposed to be the wealthiest part of the city.

Imagine, if you can, a more utterly forlorn and desolate creature than was little Robbie Reed, as he went forth that cold, dark night in quest of succor for his sick brother. Yet no thought of his own discomfort or danger was in his mind as he trudged bravely along, shivering with cold, and straining his eyes to see his way in the darkness.

The streets were now deserted, save by an occasional policeman, and these Robbie knew nothing of, except that they would get him if he came in their way, and to avoid them as much as possible he took to dodging behind boxes and barrels. In this way he wandered on nearly half an hour, but instead of finding the better section of the city, as he had hoped, the buildings were becoming fewer and more wretched, if possible, than the ones he had left. Numb with cold he was pausing a moment to try to decide whether he should press on or try to retrace his steps, when a policeman emerged from a house nearby and walked toward him. He turned in fright and dodging into a darker alley, he ran as fast as he could; the policeman's shouts and attempts to overtake him only increasing his fright and speed, until, thinking that perhaps he had been mistaken, and the fleeing object was only a dog, the policeman gave up the chase. Then, pausing to catch his breath, Robbie found himself in total darkness and knew not which way to turn to make his way back to the wider and lighter street. He wandered about for some time, sobbing quietly from cold, fright and fatigue, starting in terror at every sound, until he stumbled against a large box. Robbie was now so cold he could hardly walk; his feet and legs were numb and could scarcely be forced to move at all, and he resolved to creep into this box and rest awhile. Here he was sheltered from the cutting wind, but no sooner had he become quiet than the fatal drowsiness began to overpower him. He tried to shake it off, thinking of the waiting, suffering brother at home.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Oh, John, is you thirsty yet? I tried so hard, but I’m so cold an’ sleepy I can’t walk. I can’t git up. I——”

These words were spoken scarcely above a whisper and at the last he sank back in the box and his eyes closed in a deep long sleep.

Surely the angels must have opened wide the pearly gates, and surely the gentle Saviour must have received him with more than wonted tenderness, when he passed through. Having known nothing in this world but neglect and abuse; deserted by parents; kicked from the room by the man who had helped degrade and brutalize them; driven forth in the night by anxiety for his brother, and overcome at last by cold and fatigue: what a glorious place heaven would seem when his baby eyes opened to behold it!

It was near morning when the mother returned to find one son gone and the other raving in delirium, calling for water, for Robbie and herself, and hurrying away again she soon returned, this time bringing the water.

Robbie’s absence and John’s illness partly sobered her, and after satisfying John’s thirst she inquired for Robbie.

“Robbie? Yes, Robbie, went to hunt you and the water. But he stayed so long. The water’s good but tain’t cold. Where’s pa an’ little sister? Sing, ma, sing, like ye use ter do.”

Almost sobered now the wretched mother’s feelings were a mixture of remorse, alarm and dread.

Why had she left them so long, when John was so ill? if Robbie had gone out in the cold where was he now? If her husband had been successful, he should have been home by now. Why had she not tried to prevent his going at all? Not that she supposed it would have done the least good, still she believed she would have felt better had she done so.

Like as not he had been taken and was now in jail. But her chief anxiety was for her children, and a long train of abuse and neglect passed before her mind’s eyes, as she looked back over the past two years. Then she began to

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

feel that this was her just punishment, and almost without realizing it she was bitterly repenting neglected duties.

Meanwhile she had not been idle; the bed had been made as comfortable as possible and John placed upon it. Then with the pile of rags and the only remaining chair, broken in pieces, she kindled a fire in the grate, and placing the water in John's reach, she hurried out to look for the missing child.

Her first thought was to look for him on the streets, but as she reached the stairway, it occurred to her that possibly he might have gone in at a neighbor's room, though such an act had been strictly forbidden.

She knocked at the door nearest her own, which was opened by the woman who had entertained Miss Bellmont the evening before, whose name was Lane.

Mrs. Reed inquired for the child, telling only as much of the happenings of the night as she saw fit. Mrs. Lane guessed the rest, and said:

"La, no, he ain't bin here. Why didn't he come I wonder; I'd a' took 'em water an' stayed with 'em till you got back. But you mustn't go out to hunt Robbie. I'll wake my Jim. Jim sleeps sound. I was jist up with Trottie's how I came to hear you so quick. You go back to John, an' as soon as Jim gits started I'll come in an' stay with you. Jim'll tell the police an' they'll find 'im quicker 'n you could."

"Well, it's good o' you, but I feel as if I couldn't be still in the house till he's found. I ortn't 'a stayed so long. I didn't aim to, but—well, I didn't know I had been so long till I got back."

"A body will fergit some time," said Mrs. Lane, as she turned to arouse her husband.

Mrs. Reed re-entered her own room, where she was soon joined by Mrs. Lane.

"Jim's gone. He says Robbie's likely at a pelice station by this time. He thinks somebody's surely run across him and knowed he ortn't to be out."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"You kin set on the bed by John. I jist broke up the chair to make a fire," said Mrs. Reed.

"Well, 'twon't last long," said Mrs. Lane. "If you don't mind I'll bring in a mite o' coal. John ort ter have a warm room, I'm thinkin'." And as there was no objection Mrs. Lane returned to her room and brought back some coal and put it on the fire, saying:

"You see it's bin turnin' cold all night, but's jist beginnin' to git in the house good, and' as it's the first real cold spell, it hurts a body worse."

"Yes, an' Robbie wasn't dressed warm," said Mrs. Reed. "An', oh, if they don't find him a' fore long I think I'll go crazy."

"Now, don't you worry. Jim'll not be gone long, an' he'll likely find out somethin.' Robbie couldn't a 'a' gone fur—there John's wakin' up," she broke off, as John, who had ben resting since he was placed upon the bed, turned and opened his eyes.

"I want a drink, ma. Why don't Robbie come? He said he'd git me a drink."

He was given a drink when he again sank upon the bed and closed his eyes.

As the first streaks of dawn appeared, Mrs. Lane arose, saying:

"I must go now an' have Jim's breakfast. He'll be most froze an'll have to go to work early, but he won't come till he finds out 'bout Robbie."

A half hour later the stiffened form of little Robbie was brought up the stairway, and least the shock should prove too much for John, the little corpse was placed on a bed in Mrs. Lane's room.

The mother's grief was pitiable to see, and good Mrs. Lane was almost distracted trying to comfort her, looking after John and wondering where on earth the clothes and other necessities were to come from, in which to bury Robbie.

CHAPTER XI.

Sometime later in the day, Wm. Bellmont lay on a couch in the library, looking over the daily paper. Looking up presently, he said:

"I've been reading the casualties of last night's storm. Only one death reported so far; it was so sudden and severe, it's a wonder there isn't more."

"One person frozen to death in this city! How dreadful," said Miss Bellmont.

"Yes. Reed, a very small child only five years old. He seems to have been lost or wandered away from home; was found in a—why, aunt, what's to pay?"

But Miss Bellmont had vanished and William sat up and stared at the doorway in surprise.

I suppose now she's rushed off to investigate, he thought, and for a moment was half resolved to follow in case she should need assistance or protection. Then he smiled at the idea of his aunt's needing assistance or protection, and resumed his paper.

Miss Bellmont had hastily donned cloak and hat and was walking rapidly toward the tenement she had visited the evening before. How she blamed herself for not better providing for the children's comfort. She had not heard the last of the particulars and supposed the child had been frozen to death in the room, and the fact that it was Robbie, instead of John, puzzled her, since Robbie had seemed the more robust of the two.

It was with great relief that Mrs. Lane welcomed her again to her humble home. Mrs. Reed being yet too stupefied by grief to care or notice who came or what took place around her.

"You see it's all so sudden like, the pore thing can't

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

sense it yet," Mrs. Lane explained, in an undertone. "Comin' back an' findin' Robbie gone an' John ravin', an' then Robbie bein' brung back dead, an' as if that want nuff, that onery man o' hern must go an' git took up fer 'tempted robbery. John ain't had no medicine an' they ain't nothin' to bury pore Robbie in, as I can find."

"That's what I came about," said Miss Bellmont. "The sick child must have attention first. You may tell me the particulars afterward. Is there any one that could be sent for a physician?"

"Yes, there's a boy down stairs'll go. Jim had to work today an' was gone afore I had time ter think an' there's nobody up here I wanted to leave here, or I'd a went myself, but I'll see if that boy's in now. Who'll he go after?"

"The nearest one I suppose, provided he is a good physician," said Miss Bellmont, and Mrs. Lane disappeared down the stairway.

Miss Bellmont turned to the grief-stricken mother and tried to comfort her, but her words seemingly fell upon deaf ears, and she presently turned her attention to the room where John lay still feverish, but quiet and uncomplaining. She did what she could to tidy up the room, mentally making notes of the things needful for the sick child's comfort.

Before she had quite finished Mrs. Lane came to the door and beconed her out in the hall.

"I've got the best doctor in the city," she said, proudly. "That boy was gone an' I went mysef. The first doctor I called fer was out an' I met this man on the street an' asked him to come. He's a queer sort, they say, part doctor, part preacher, an' missionary, an' the Lord knows what all, but the best o' *any* of 'em. There he comes now." And Mrs. Lane disappeared inside her own door and was back with a chair in time to enter the sick room before Paul Rivers, for of course it was he. She placed the chair beside the bed and stationed herself at the foot.

Paul Rivers examined his patient carefully and then

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

seating himself in the chair he looked thoughtfully at him in silence.

"Do you think he's very bad, sir?" asked Mrs. Lane.

"Yes, he is very ill; has been for some time. Is he your child?" was the reply.

"No, he ain't mine."

And on being questioned, Mrs. Lane gave him a history of the Reeds as far as she knew it, dwelling more particularly on the last two days; how John was taken ill and left by his parents and how Robbie had started in search of water and been brought back dead, closing with:

"An' I don't know what's ter become o' Mis' Reed if she has ter loose John, too. 'Pears like she's most crazy now."

Mr. Rivers had prepared John's medicine while she was speaking, and when she had finished he said:

"I will see her a moment."

Mrs. Lane showed him to the door and then came back to Miss Bellmont, saying:

"They say that's the way he always goes; his Bible in one hand and his medicine in tother. Well, I hope he'll say suthin' to comfort the pore soul; she needs it."

So thought Paul Rivers when he looked into her worn face and read therein the bitterness of despair.

"I have been to see your sick child, Mrs. Reed; he is very ill, but God is merciful and may spare him to you yet," said he.

She looked at him a moment in silence, scarcely comprehending his words, then she said:

"Oh, no. God is not merciful to such as me. He's only just." And her eyes turned to the little form on the bed, and her tears began to fall.

Paul Rivers said nothing for a moment. He knew she had done very wrong, but he left her judgment to One able to understand her peculiar weakness and temptations, and saw before him only a distressed soul in need of help. Finally he said:

"Mrs. Reed, your neighbor tells me you are a Christian;

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

as such you know where to look for help in this dark hour. You know your babes who have gone before are safe with Him, who loved and blessed such as they while on earth; you can be thankful that your husband was prevented committing the crime he intended and hope that his imprisonment will cause a pause in his present life and mark the beginning of a new; and in the meantime your living child requires all your attention."

"Oh, I used to think I was a Christian," said Mrs. Reed, replying to the first part of his speech, "but lately all has been so dark I don't know. Some times I think they ain't no God, at least for the poor. Of course I'm wrong. But why, oh why, does a God o' mercy, as you call Him, let such awful things happen?"

"My dear, madam, if this world were all, we might indeed doubt the existence of a God. But have you not read in His word that justice is certain in the end? That our works are to follow us when we leave this world and by them we are to be judged, whether they be good or evil?"

"Yes, I've read and I know I've been wicked, but it seemed I couldn't help it."

"Have you not read also how very kind and patient the Saviour is with those who try to do His will? Did you ever read of His being angry with one who was trying to follow Him no matter how they erred?"

"No, I can't say I ever did."

"Then can you not believe He will forgive you and help you if you ask Him?"

"But I have been so wicked. I left my children to starve, while I spent money for drink and if I had been with 'em last night, Robbie wouldn't 'a' gone out."

"And if something had not occurred to stop you probably you would have gone on to a drunkard's grave," said Mr. Rivers, gravely. "Can you not see in it all the hand of a loving Father, who would draw you from the dangerous road you have been traveling, back into His own narrow but safe pathway? 'The Lord loveth whom he chasteneth.'"

Mrs. Reed sat a moment in silence, and then replied:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"I'll try to look at it as you do. I must find comfort some where or die. But it looks dark to me yet."

"You have been traveling a dark road," was the reply. "But with God's help you will find your way back into the light one." And Paul Rivers took his leave, thinking as he descended the stairway:

"The same old story. Drunkenness on the part of the parents for which the innocent children must suffer."

Miss Bellmont made arrangements for Robbie's burial, and fitted up a comfortable bed for John, after which she took her leave, promising to return the next day and accompany Mrs. Reed to the burying ground.

Miss Bellmont had made no comment when Mrs. Lane had told the particulars of Robbie's wanderings as far as she knew them to Mr. Rivers, and a casual observer might have thought her indifferent, but she had been deeply stirred, both by the story of the baby's death, that she had heard the evening before, and by Robbie's death, and the cruel way John had been neglected.

She was certain some one was terribly to blame for these dreadful occurrences. She blamed herself for leaving the boys as she had the night before. Such parents should not be trusted with their children, though just what she could, or should have done she scarcely knew. Of course she could not foresee such things as had occurred or she would certainly have done something. Such things as rum shops should not be permitted among the poor to tempt them to starve their children and abuse and desert them, she concluded. Why didn't some one stop them?

By the time she reached home she had fretted herself into an indignant excitement that was not cooled by finding William lying comfortably where she had left him.

"William, how can you lie quietly here while so much sin and misery exist almost at your door?"

William arose to a sitting posture and looked his surprise.

"Sin? Misery? In what form has it appeared now?"

"In it's very worst, I should say."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

And she gave him a graphic account of the Reed's, enlarging upon the baby's death and Robbie's fatal journey in quest of water for his sick brother. Adding:

"And something of the kind is going on all the time. Sunday, I learn, is the worst day for drunkenness in the lower quarters and there are continual brawls with no attempt to check them, and little or no attempt to punish the lawless. Why do you not do something? How can you, a Christian man, rest quietly here, knowing about these things as you do?"

William's face had grown dark as his aunt had told the story of the Reeds, but as she finished speaking, he said:

"My dear, aunt, what can I do? I can't turn detective and attempt to ferret out every liquor dealer who breaks the laws." Then more lightly. "Come, aunt, take Isabelle's advice and avoid all the unpleasant things of life you can. You'll have quite enough then, I assure you, without poking around hunting them up. Quit it at once if you have a care for your peace of mind. Shut your eyes to the wicked and repulsive things of life, and see only the pleasant side of things. That's optimism of to-day, and I strongly advise you to cultivate it." And William resumed his book.

"I am surprised, William, that you can be so heartless," said his aunt, severely, "as to actually shut your eyes to the needs of your fellow creatures."

Again Bellmont put his book aside and half amused, half annoyed, he asked:

"Well, then what would you have me do? I can't go out and shoot all these rum selling gentry, much as I may feel inclined to do so. There are unfortunately, stringent laws against such proceedings, and I have no desire to go dancing out of this vale of tears with a hemp-necktie and a purple complexion. Hemp neckties, I'm told, are decidedly uncomfortable, while a purple complexion, I do not think, would be particularly enhancing to my style of beauty, besides."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“William Belmont would anything under the sun induce you to talk sense a few moments?”

William recognized the low, stern voice that in former days had marked the limit of his aunt's patience. She used to speak to him in just that tone of voice after his very worst pranks and further indulgence in mischief that day had invariably been followed by a visit to a dark closet or a sound thrashing.

Perhaps he feared some such denouement even now for he glanced warily at her over the edge of his book, but seeing her sink into a chair and begin taking off her gloves he resolved upon a final shot before the surrender he saw was inevitable. So he said:

“Oh, so it's sense you want. I notice that is what most reformers want, but they seldom have the modesty to confess their need and seek it with such persistency. One would think you a modern Solomon, the way you seek understanding and run after knowledge. And like Solomon, you shall not go unrewarded if my somewhat limited stock of wisdom can benefit you. What particular kind of sense do you feel most in need of?”

“I do not see that you are becoming any more sensible, and, William, this is a very serious question, it seems to me. Men and women degraded and brutalized and little children beaten and left to die from cold and hunger. Rum shops among the poor and ignorant are a constant menace to morals and decent living. Where do such practices originate and why are they permitted in a free Christian land like this? That's what I would like to know.”

William put his book aside and arose. He walked the length of the room and back before he replied:

“Well, aunt, as to where the practice of liquor selling and drinking originated, I think there can be but one opinion. They originated from the Devil, and with so many of our people slaves to the liquor habit or to the liquor dealer, the old gentleman has about as good a hold on this free land of ours as he wants. It is only fair to the liquor dealer to say that he does not go into business with the avowed

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

intention of starving children, killing people and ruining souls. He adopts it as an easy way of making money. If the before mentioned crimes follow he does not consider himself to blame for them. His business is legal; permitted by an enlightened government and people. Why should he not make money at it, and has he not a right to do all in his power to increase his business. The merchants in other trades frequently give samples of their goods to persons whom they hope to make permanent customers. Why should not he? As to why such a business is permitted you might ask a dozen different persons and receive as many different answers. In former days we are told that nations and individuals were permitted to go on in crime because their cup of wickedness was not yet full, but if the liquor dealer's cup of iniquity is not about full then it must be an exceedingly large one. Still the crime is a national one and I will say to you when in traveling over our country I see the many evils resulting from this business, when I see men and women reduced to the most abject slavery by it, when I know that boys and girls are lured by it to lives of sin and shame and innocent children and babes neglected, beaten and left to die because of it, and that our prisons, insane asylums and alms houses are filled chiefly through this one great evil, I say when I know all these things are results of the liquor trade and am forced to acknowledge that my government actually compromises with and does but little to check the baleful work, I have felt that if the whole country, with its long train of crimes, could be swept from the face of the earth, buried in the depth of the ocean or hidden somewhere from view, I'd gladly be swept with it. And when one glances back over the ages at nation's crimes from the Israelites down to our own, but recently abolished slave trade, and bears in mind that said crimes have invariably been atoned for by the erring nation's blood, one may well tremble at the terrible mountain of sin that has been accumulating against our own nation these years, because of the liquor traffic.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“But, William, you don’t think a war necessary to stop the sale of liquor,” said his aunt.

“Who can say? War has been waged for lesser evils. War is dreadful, but so are the results of the liquor traffic dreadful, and if God in His wrath shall require that every drop of blood shed, every innocent life taken, every broken heart, every body ruined and every soul ensnared by it shall be paid for in blood, who would dare say that His judgments were not true and righteous, as of old.”

“But, William, that sounds dreadful. I didn’t mean that. War is wrong.”

“Since when has it become wrong, if I might ask?” remarked William.

“Well, since the Christian era, I presume.”

“Then our revolution and rebellion was wrong, and all participants therein criminals instead of the heroes we have been taught to believe them. No, aunt, war may be really wrong, as you say, but at present it is the only antidote we have for some crimes just as poison is the only antidote we have for some poisons, and while good and evil dwell together on this earth, it will be administered in small and large doses. And you talk of dreadfulness of war. What can be more dreadful than some of the crimes permitted in the reign of peace. This same liquor trade, for instance. There can be more loss of life, to say nothing of crime and suffering traced to it, than to any war in history. Yet we are horrified at the mere suggestion that a war might be required to end it, but if a foreign nation should kill or wrong one of our countrymen we would don our fighting togs and talk war until we were black in the face. Having our citizens killed abroad by some foreigner, perhaps one a year, and having them killed at home by the thousands, by men who pay us good money for the privilege, are too widely different things you see. Great is American patriotism! But I am no advocate of war. I believe crime can be fought down by more human methods. If people, supposed to be interested in saving souls, would unite in demanding better con-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

ditions and environment they could do wonders in mitigating crime, and smoothing and straightening the path of the Lord for their weaker brother for whom it is often very rough and crooked. We see them stumble almost daily into some snare of the liquor trade, see the chains wound more surely about them with each dram they take and then drug slowly, but surely to a drunkard's grave—to a drunkard's hell—and we say scarcely a word. We see our boys caught in the seething whirlpool and started on the road to ruin, but we cannot help it. Of course we're sorry to think they have no more sense, but there always have been foolish boys and we presume there always will be. The liquor trade would be a troublesome thing to deal with, so we leave the boys to their fate and discuss our church creeds and the future state of the unsaved.

“We know that innocent children are starved and abused as a result of this same liquor traffic, but we do not permit it to disturb the even tenor of our lives. We presume there always has been suffering in the world and likely always will be, so we content ourselves with building elegant church houses, employing pastors who will preach to suit us, and not ruffle our feelings in any way, and send what ever we can spare conveniently to missions.”

William paused a moment in his walk about the room and gazed reflectively into the fire. Miss Bellmont swayed thoughtfully back and forth, but remained silent and presently William continued:

“I have often wondered, aunt, what Christ would do should He come among His churches in person today. When He came to the Jewish people He found they had made God's temple a den for thieves and He drove them out instantly, and we are inclined to think of them as very wicked people, but how much better is the church of today? The church officials may be in the liquor business in a wholesale, therefore respectable, way, and if he contributes liberally no one objects to his business. Other prominent members go in for gambling in a genteel way, and sometimes swindle hundreds out of their last dollar.”

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Again William paused, and his aunt, who was instantly on the defensive, said:

“And in short, William, you are thoroughly disgusted with Christianity and wish yourself back in the world, where crime and inconsistency are unknown.”

“I—I did not say so, aunt,” said he.

“Your words imply as much at least,” was the calm reply. “And, William, are you not also disgusted with American people? Why, you cannot look at a paper, but you see crimes of all sorts, often too revolting even to mention. Do you not wish you were a citizen of some respectable heathen country or other where crime is unknown?”

William was silent a moment and then replied, slowly:

“I had not thought of it in that way before, and, believe me, aunt, my words were not prompted by a desire to find fault with the church. We are often severest with those whom we love best. I want to have faith in my church, yet it seems to me we should do something besides build church houses and send out missionaries. The saloons, gambling dens and other like resorts are not afraid of the churches.”

“Perhaps not as churches, yet almost every reform or good work that has been done, was brought about by Christian men and women, though it is usually done in such a quiet way that some one else usually claims and gets the credit for it.

“Our country itself was founded by Christian men and women, strong enough in their faith to brave the dangers of a long voyage and the perils of the wilderness, that they and their children might be able to worship God conscientiously, and while we are prone to smile at their rude lives, who can say how much of God’s toleration of our crimes as a nation today, is due to their piety and strict religious principles? Like the wayward Israelites of old, who were not entirely cut off because of the promise to Abraham, perhaps we too are not cut off or destroyed, because of our forefathers’ faithfulness. History repeats itself, you

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

know. Then, too, while our but recently abolished slave trade was ended by the government, it was the persistent teaching, preaching and writing of Christian people that brought public opinion up to the point of demanding it, and so I think it must be with the liquor trade and like evils.

“The government must ultimately end them, but it rests with Christian people to train public opinion up to demanding it, and that, I admit, we are not doing as we should. But, William, my boy, I have thought these things out for myself long ago, and decided that I am responsible to God, only, for my own talents, my own life and influence, and these I mean to use as best I can in spite of discouragement and seeming defeat. Just my own little niche is all I am required to fill. God will take care of results and the rest of His church.”

“A brave resolution, aunt,” replied William, soberly, “and you seem to have found your little niche. Perhaps I shall mine in time; anyway you have given me a finer grip on faith and a more wholesome view of Christianity. But I still believe that the church is neglecting many of her most sacred obligations. She should demand a purer membership and be more zealous in saving souls and, in what seems to me to amount to the something, in destroying evils that ruin them.”

“And I agree with you,” replied his aunt. “Yet careless and inconsistent as Christianity seems to be, it has done more for the world than anything else. It is still the salt that is saving humanity, and while many of us seem to have lost our savor, there are many earnest, consecrated Christians who are pouring out their very heart’s blood in battle with sin, counting it but their reasonable service to do so. They have the faith of an old minister, I once heard. He said if God should order him to walk through a stone wall it would be his business to walk up to the wall; God’s business to show him the way through. And if more of us had faith like that many walls of sin, that now look so formidable, would soon be crumbled to dust. But no; we

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

have not the faith to walk up to the wall and God can do nothing until we do. We must put ourselves in a right attitude toward God, then wait for the still small voice within to tell us what to do, and if we waste our time and bury our talents until every one is done quarreling or sinning we will do nothing, but if we quietly use our time and talents to the best of our knowledge we will not only influence others to do likewise, but in the end will have the joy of hearing the 'well done thou good and faithful servant.' "

"And of course you think I am wasting my time," said William, dropping back to his old quizzical manner of speech that Miss Bellmont had learned to ignore entirely. "You also seem to think I have a talent stowed away somewhere, but if so it must be very small as I have been unable to find it up to date."

"A very small pick if wielded by a strong and willing arm can make a large hole in a wall; so a very small talent if used wisely, can work wonders," was the reply.

"Perhaps you will mention one of the wonders I might accomplish," observed William. "I may conclude to sift myself and hunt up my talent and shall want to know how to use it."

"You will have to know what your talent is before you can use it to much advantage. And the best way to sift yourself and discover that is to pick up and do the little things that lie about. Doing this will bring to light your talent for doing greater things, if you have one."

"And these little things? For instance," said William, more soberly.

"Oh, they are too numerous to mention," replied his aunt. "But for instance you could have some of the dens of sin in this city watched and their keepers punished, when they break the laws, which they do almost daily. You could also use your influence toward securing better officers. The ignorant voter needs to be shown how unpatriotic it is to sell or buy votes and how it prevents the voice of the people from ruling as it should."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“And all this with one little talent or perhaps none at all,” said William. “But of course I know what you mean, aunt, and ought to be ashamed of my good-for-nothing banter when you must be tired. You are a born leader, and I will be your humble follower. I will take up my little pick and go to work on this liquor traffic wall at once. That I presume is the way Mr. Rivers began and he is making a hole of no mean size too, he has already given me much good advice, and will perhaps help me more. Here, aunt. lie on this couch and rest.” And William wheeled the comfortable library couch closer the grate, lowered the window shades and left Miss Bellmont to take a much-needed rest.

CHAPTER XII.

Mr. Everett had so far clung to his resolution not to drink. Knowing that his only safety lay in not tasting liquor he had avoided Mr. Bunn's and refused every offer of treats and declined all invitations to take social glasses with friends often calling down upon himself the ridicule of bystanders.

A few there were who sympathized with him and tried to encourage him. Among these were Tom Long and Jack Winters.

"You jist stick to it Dan an' never tech another drop. It'll get so after while 'twon't be so hard. I know how it goes. I had to bring myself up short once to keep out o' a drunkard's grave. Whenever yer tempted ter drink jist think o' poor Carl Newman."

"That's true as preachin, what Long told you," said Jack Winters. The miners were coming home from work and some of them as usual had stopped at Bunn's. Tom Long was crossing the street and heard the laugh that followed Mr. Everett's refusal to stop; called forth. He slackened his speed until the crowd had entered the saloon and had then spoken to Mr. Everett. Jack was standing in the door of his restaurant and heard his remarks.

"You just let the fools laugh if they want to," he continued. "Some of 'em like myself only envy you your pluck in tryin' to stop while the rest ain't got sense enough to want to quit. You jist stick to it an' let the stuff alone." And Mr. Everett had done so as before stated until Christmas and the holidays came and a thoughtless fun loving cousin of his came from the city to visit him. He was much surprised when Mr. Everett refused to stop at Bunn's one evening for a drink.

"Ain't joined the church have you?" he asked.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"No," replied Mr. Everett, who disliked owing that he was so weak he could not take a social glass as some men did, and quit at that.

"What, then?" persisted the cousin.

"Oh, it costs too much, and since I've bought our little home I save every dime I can to pay on it." And Mr. Everett walked on by the saloon.

His cousin said no more, but since he had been the one to offer the treat, he could not see Dan's reason for refusing to drink it.

"Maybe though he thought I'd expect him to pay back, but I didn't. I know what I'll do though. I know Dan likes a dram as well as anybody and as we're going hunting tomorrow I'll lay in a supply o' the best Bunn's got and it won't cost Dan a cent." And thinking to surprise and please his friend he secretly made his purchase and kept it hidden until near the end of the day's sport when they were both tired and cold and had paused on the sunny side of a hill to arrange their game, preparatory to the three-mile tramp across the plain to town, when taking a flask from his pocket he said:

"Here, Dan, is something to keep us warm on our way back home. We won't feel that biting wind so and if you're afraid Mollie'll smell your breath I've got some killers here you can use."

Mr. Everett's first thought was to refuse.

"I've quit drinkin' I told you," he said.

"Of course you have. So have I. That is I don't get drunk, but where's the harm in takin' a dram in a case like this; Christmas times, too. I never thought you 'd be such a Miss Prim, Dan," said the cousin in a disappointed voice as he prepared to return the flask to his pocket.

Mr. Everett began to weaken when it came over him that his cousin had prepared this little treat to please him. He hated to disappoint him and perhaps after all he had done without so long that it did not have the hold on him it once had. So he allowed himself to think and said:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Well, give it here then. I’ll drink with you this once, since you’re going away tomorrow. But you needn’t mind the killers. Whatever else I do I never lie to my wife.”

“Lucky woman, she; and here’s to her health,” replied his friend, passing one flask to him while he uncorked another for himself. Before the homeward journey was half over Mr. Everett’s flask was empty and turning to his cousin he said:

“Say, coz; that stuff is good. Bunn must ’a spread hisself cause ’twas Christmas. If you’ve got more’n you want, you can divide up an’ I’ll make it all O.K. when we git to Bunn’s. It takes a good deal to make a taste for me.”

His cousin passed him his flask, saying;

“It’s alright anyway. I got it for you and I don’t want no pay back. But I wouldn’t drink much more now if I was you. It’ll keep till tomorrow.”

Useless advice! Mr. Everett emptied the second flask and when they came to Mr. Bunn’s insisted upon stopping for more.

Too late, his cousin realized what a drink of whisky meant to Mr. Everett, and he greatly deplored his so-called friendliness.

“Better come on home now, Dan,” he said as Mr. Everett’s hand was on the door knob of the saloon. “We’ll want to get some o’ this game ready for supper; besides you’ve had a plenty today I’m thinkin’. They ain’t no sense in a man makin’ a beast o’ hisself. I wouldn’t a got the stuff if I’d a thought about you bein’ such a dunce. Come on now.”

“No, I’m goin’ in,” was the reply. “Think I’m drunk? Guess I know when I’ve got enough,” and Mr. Everett pushed on into the saloon where he was greeted boisterously—

“Hello! The prodigal returned!” shouted Bunn, who was in an unusually good humor from the fact that he was making an unusual amount of money; and no doubt thinking the time was near when he could go out of business and be a Christian he bethought him to begin to practice quoting scripture.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Walk right up old friend and have something for your stomach’s sake,” as the Bible commands.

The majority of the bystanders laughed at this silly speech but one there was who shot Bunn an angry, contemptuous glance and said:

“Bah! Za Bunn, cuss words ’d sound better from you than scripture quotin’. The Bible says, ‘Wo unto him that giveth his neighbor strong drink,’ too. Za Bunn, where’s my boy?” he continued more fiercely than before.

Mr. Bunn was a little taken aback by this rough speech but nothing could long dampen his exuberant spirit. Was he not making more money than any one else in town? and could not money do everything? So mustering an indulgent smile he said:

“Oh, now friend Hobkins. You don’t mean all that. I can’t really see as I’m to blame about your boy. I done all I could to keep him away from McGregor’s. But go he would. Strange what low tastes some folks can get, but I can’t help it.” And Mr. Bunn heaved a sigh of patient resignation. “The idea of folks preferin’ a place like McGregor’s to a respectable drinking establishment like mine.”

The irate Hobkins looked ready to throttle him, but smothered his anger somewhat and replied with withering sarcasm:

“My boy never had sich low tastes till he begun comin’ to your respectable drinkin’ establishment. An’ what’s more he wouldn’t a begun comin’ here if you hadn’t a persuaded him to come an’ play his flute an took to payin’ him in drinks. In my opinion Mack’s a better man than you cause he’s plain out what he is an’ don’t sneak behind the Bible an’ quote scripture to back up his meanness, but if the devil don’t have an oncommon warm place for both of you he ain’t next his job, that’s all.” And Hobkins stalked from the saloon and crossed to McGregor’s in search of his boy. And there he found him in a company of drunken revelers playing cards, gambling, and singing coarse, vulgar songs.

With difficulty he induced him to leave the saloon and go

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

home with him, and once outside the accursed place the father tried earnestly to show his son that he was ruining his own life, breaking his mother's heart and bringing his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave.

And yet that father is doing absolutely nothing toward breaking up a business that is ruining thousands of boys as dear to some one as his own boy is to him.

Mr. Everett, after having his flask filled, started toward home again with his cousin, but as they came in sight of the house he stopped short and said:

"No; I won't go home. Mollie'll turn so white an' Ada'll look at me with them big eyes o' her's like I'd killed somebody. I'm goin' back to Bunn's."

"No you're not," replied his cousin, firmly. "You're going on home with me." He deeply regretted having induced his cousin to drink, but eased his conscience by thinking that it was Christmas times and this would be only a Christmas spree. Once get him home and in bed he would sleep it off and be none the worse for it.

"Come on, I say," he continued as Mr. Everett still persisted in returning. "I'll tell Mollie 'twas my fault and a new dress will make peace with Ada's eyes, I reckon."

And with much coaxing he succeeded in getting Mr. Everett to his home.

Mrs. Everett's face turned fully as white as her husband had expected, nor did it grow any the less so when his cousin called her to one side and attempted to explain. All explanations froze on his lips when he once looked into the wife's face and saw the pain there.

Ada's eyes, too, looked grief and reproach at both men, though her lips spoke no word and looking into their accusing depths the cousin realized that no present of his could heal the wounds he had so thoughtlessly inflicted. Consulting his watch he found he had time to catch a train for the city and decided to do so that night instead of waiting until morning as he had intended—and hastily packing his valise he departed, Mr. Everett going with him to the train.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Both men had eaten a hasty supper and the cousin had tried to induce Mr. Everett to go to bed, but he would not, and again thinking it would prove only a Christmas spree after all, his cousin said no more and walked to the train in silence.

"O! I wish he hadn't come," said Ada as soon as they were out of hearing, and her mother heartily echoed the wish, though she said:

"Never mind, Ada. Maybe your father won't stay drunk long this time. His cousin did not think, I suppose." And as Ada began to sob she continued:

"Maybe I can get something to do again and you can help Saturdays and before and after school and we won't have to let our home go back. It's nearly half paid for and I was counting on moving into it by spring. We lived here this winter you know because our place rents for so much more than this. I thought we could put up with it this winter. It'll be so nice; having a home again," The mother talked on, hoping to comfort her child, but her own heart misgave her sadly. She turned almost faint as the probability of losing the home she had begun to look upon as hers. But she would not think of it; not yet.

"You and the children have clothes enough for the winter and the coal house is nearly full," she said as Ada still sobbed. "I think we can manage without giving up our home. Of course 'twon't really be ours till it is paid for but we could do that easy in a year if—we could go on as we have been." The mother spoke of what she supposed was nearest her child's heart and was rather surprised by her reply.

"But, mamma, I wasn't thinking of that: I'd love to live there and have a home as you say, but I was thinking of papa: if he keeps on what will become of him? You know what he said about Mr. Newman. He said he could just feel all over as he watched him, that he was going to torment. And if papa keeps on won't he go too? I'd be glad to live here always and do without everything if only he could

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

quit drinking and be a Christian. We'd all have a home together after while then."

The mother's tears were falling too now. How often had she thought and hoped and prayed over these same things, seemingly all to no avail.

"We can only pray, Ada, and trust in Him who hears the cry of the distressed," she replied presently, wiping her eyes as the boys came crowding around her scarcely understanding what, yet knowing something was wrong.

"Mamma, is papa drunk? Did he go back to Mr. Bunn's?" asked James, the oldest lad.

"No, child. God knows. I hope not," she replied as it came upon her for the first time that that was most likely what he had done.

"But it is time you were in bed." And while Ada finished the dishes the mother put the younger children to bed.

When they were snugly tucked in and the dishes disposed of Mrs. Everett and Ada seated themselves by the fire, the one to sew and the other to prepare her lessons for the morrow. Ada took up her book but was unable to keep her mind upon it any length of time. Her thoughts would go wandering after her father and she wondered how her mother could work on so steadily while he was in such danger. She could not understand how one can become so accustomed to disappointment and grief as to be able to go about apparently indifferent to it: to go through the daily routine of working, eating, sleeping, bearing sorrows in silence as a matter of course and expecting little else.

"Mother," said Ada, at last. "Let me sew, I can't study tonight." And possessing herself of a needle she took up a garment to mend.

"When do you think papa'll come back?"

"How can I tell, child? Maybe tonight. Maybe not until morning. But you had best go to bed too, I can finish this mending."

"No, let me stay up, mamma. I couldn't sleep anyway. Mamma, do you believe God answers prayers?"

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Certainly, Ada; if it is best they should be answered.”

“Well, I’ve prayed so much for papa: for God to make him quit drinking you know and it don’t seem like my prayers are answered.”

“Well, Ada, I’ve prayed for the same thing nearly ten years, yet I do not doubt God’s promise to answer prayer. Sometimes I feel very sad and downhearted, but it is comforting to know we have a kind Father who will give us what is best for us. Come now, we will go to bed.”

“Let’s read the eighth chapter of Romans tonight, mamma,” said Ada, bringing the little Bible.

After reading and prayer both mother and daughter retired for the night. Not both to sleep, however. Ada, despite her declaration that she could not sleep, was soon sleeping soundly, and it was the mother who remained awake. She had retired solely for the purpose of quieting Ada, knowing well that her own eyes would be sleepless that night.

She had tried to keep the brightest side of their often clouded life before her daughter, whom she knew was growing old before her time. She was anxious and grieved for her husband for his own sake, but since Ada had grown to take his drinking so to heart, she was more grieved that her young life should be clouded by anxiety for her father.

Ada was so sensitive, every one said, and took everything so to heart: she was not like other children. And this was true: she believed with all her heart that unless her father repented of his sins, and turned from them he would be doomed to eternal punishment, and read her Bible and try as she would she could see no other end for him.

To be sure if Ada could have consulted some of our learned critics of today she might have derived much consolation from them. She would have doubtless learned that her father might live any life he pleased in this world and repent and be saved in the next. But only having her Bible, poor child, she found no such consolation. Hence her great anxiety.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Mrs. Everett understood her child's feelings perfectly and her own anxiety was increased in that it affected Ada.

Then, too, she must think of the results temporarily. If her husband continued drinking she must try to get work to support her children. She knew from past experience that if he gave full rein to his appetite it would take all he was making to keep him in drink even if he worked all the time. Perhaps she could get the washings again that she did through the summer, but her heart turned faint at the remembrance of the headaches and backaches that always followed a day's washing. Yet there was little else to do. The women of Rosedale mostly did their own sewing and the one seamstress, that had only been there a year, barely made a living. Still, dark as the prospect looked, she tried to find a bright side to it. The children were very well supplied with clothes and there was enough fuel to last through the winter, provided it was not too long and severe; for the rest she had learned to manage with such a little; surely she could earn that little. So thinking and planning she lay awake until past midnight.

Borrowing trouble you would say? No. For she knew that her husband had with him every cent they had in the world, except what they had paid on their home, and the chances were it would all go in one night and if he continued drinking they would have nothing to live on unless she earned it and she was only trying to be prepared to meet what she felt must come.

And come it did. Mr. Everett did not return until dawn and then it was with an empty purse. He entered the kitchen where his wife was preparing the morning meal and tossing the purse upon the table said:

"Don't see what the deuce went with all the money. Know I didn't drink so much, but it's gone and no use to worry."

"No, we won't worry, Dan; we won't be long making it back. The place is nearly half paid for you know, and work's likely to be good 'till May. We can have the place paid for and be living at home by then."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Hem,” said Mr. Everett. “Don’t know, Mollie, I’ve been thinkin’ we oughtn’t have gone in debt so. Most o’ the miners rents. Better live while we do live and not be skimpin’ ourselves to lay up and—” Here Mr. Everett took a bottle from his pocket and took a long draught of its contents which seemed to increase his courage wonderfully, for where before he had been speaking hesitatingly and avoiding his wife’s searching eyes, he now looked boldly at her and continued, “And in short, Mollie, I just went ’round this morning and told Bennet he might have the place back if he’d pay me what I’d paid him on it and he was glad to do it, too. He’s goin’ to pay me this evening and you can have half the money to do as you please with. You can get that carpet and lounge you done without last fall so as to pay the money on the place.”

“But, Dan, I don’t want the place to go back,” protested Mrs. Everett. “I’d rather do without everything till it’s paid for: then we ’d have a home and wouldn’t have to move or pay rent. Don’t do it Dan. Mr. Bennett won’t mind and we can pay for it easy in a year.”

Mr. Everett took another drink from the bottle before he replied:

“Well, it’s goin’ back anyway. I told Bennett he could have it an’ I won’t go back on it. It costs a sight to keep up a place: taxes an’ everything. A poor man never has nothin’ but a livin’ anyway an’ had just as well live while he does live.”

“But what of him when he dies, Dan? If he spends his time and money to indulge his brutish appetites what becomes of his soul?” asked Mrs. Everett, stung to desperation at the prospect of the weary life that seemed to unroll before her as her husband spoke.

“Oh, I don’t know,” replied he. “There is people that don’t believe in a hereafter an’ there’s others that thinks there’ll be plenty o’ time to repent in the next world.”

“Yes, Dan. I’ve no doubt there’ll be plenty of time in the next world to repent: a whole eternity: but it will be too late then to do you any good. Now is the only time we

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

have to be saved and if we slight God and our duties and live wicked in this world we've no right to expect Him to save us in the next and people that teaches such things are either adding to or taking from God's word for there is no such hopes given in the Bible."

Mr. Everett looked vexed and ate his breakfast in silence and left the house.

Mrs. Everett shed a few bitter tears of disappointment as she went about her morning work. The children were yet asleep and need not know of their loss for a few days. Each child was deeply interested in the new home and had talked and planned how they would live and what they would do when they came to occupy it. There were only four rooms, a pantry, veranda and back porch but the house seemed a mansion to them beside the two small rooms where they now lived and each child had been promised a corner or closet of its very own and the most minute arrangements had been discussed at length and as the mother remembered this she felt the disappointment for her children more than for herself.

When the children awoke she prepared their breakfast, avoiding Ada's questioning eyes. After the children had eaten she threw a shawl over her head and went to see three of the women for whom she had formerly worked and they were only too glad to get her to work for them again and one of them said:

"La, now I'm so glad to have you wash for me again. My clothes are most ruined going from one place to another, but I thought you 'd quit washing."

"I have decided to try it again," replied Mrs. Everett, knowing that the whole wretched trouble would soon be known to every one, but resolved no one should learn it from her.

She had all the work she could do and if she only stayed able to do it she would not complain. She never received one cent that had been returned to Mr. Everett for their home nor had she expected it. She tried hard not to worry and to console Ada with the thought that when father did

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“sober up” he might not again be led to drink. She told Ada of the loss of the property and together they planned to keep it from the boys as long as possible.

For the first few weeks Mrs. Everett bore the extra work well, then it seemed to her she could never get rested but she struggled on through February washing by day and ironing and mending by night until near the middle of March.

There came an unusually cold wave, a cutting wind with snow, but the work must be done: her children must have bread. A washing was promised for that day and the water had to be carried some distance. Before this was done Mrs. Everett was chilled through but finished her work. Ada, noticing how pale her mother looked at noon, insisted upon remaining at home in the afternoon to help.

Near midnight Mrs. Everett awoke with a chill. At day break she tried to arise but her head seemed bursting and she was forced to fall back on her pillow. Calling Ada she told her to prepare breakfast for the children.

Ada was alarmed at her mother's illness and would not be persuaded that it was only a “light headache” that would soon go away, as her mother tried to make her believe.

She knew that no light headache would keep her mother in bed and child though she was she had also noticed with sinking heart how pale and thin her mother had grown in the last two months.

She hastily prepared the breakfast and then got the two oldest ready for school.

Mr. Everett had not come home during the night. He avoided home now as much as possible. When he was sober enough to think at all he saw what a cowardly act he had done in depriving his family of their home and leaving his wife to provide for them as he did. He had really meant to give her part of the money but after he had received he had walked toward home via Mr. Bunn's: had stopped to have a glass and chat; was persuaded to play a little; just enough to allow one or two sharpers present to secure all his money, then he was ashamed to go home and stayed on

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

drinking more heavily and becoming more of a beast all the time. Since then he had worked just enough to keep himself in drink and spent the rest of his time at Bunn's, while his wife was working her life away to earn bread for his children.

Mrs. Everett grew rapidly worse until noon. Ada had begged to go for the physician but the mother would not consent. She might feel better presently and she could ill afford to incur needless expense. But at noon she reluctantly gave Ada leave to go, and running across the street to ask Mrs. Brown to stay with her mother Ada was greeted with:

"La, now, I jist knowed it would come to that. Yes, run along honey. I'll go right off." And throwing a shawl over her head she hurried across the street.

"In bed are you? I was afraid of it when I saw you out in that wind yesterday. Let me fix a cloth for your head." And the good woman busied herself trying to make her suffering neighbor more comfortable.

The physician came, pronounced it a serious attack of pneumonia, left medicines and directions and went away, promising to call again next day.

But instead of getting better Mrs. Everett grew steadily worse. She could eat nothing and was troubled with a distressing cough that the medicine did not relieve.

Mr. Everett came home the second night of his wife's illness and the next day went to work in earnest. His Christmas spree had cost him dear, thus far, and was likely to prove dearer still.

It had been Jack Winters who had told him of his wife's illness. Ada had sent James there for bread and noticing the child's sober face, Jack had questioned him closely and finally learned of the mother's illness. He already knew of the father's drunkenness and pressing a sack of lemons and oranges on the child he went in to Mr. Bunn's to look for Mr. Everett. And there he found him laughing and jesting with his coarse companions. Jack called him out and asked:

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“Dan Everett, do you know your wife’s sick and your family nothing hardly to live on?”

Mr. Everett turned pale but was inclined to resent Jack’s speech.

“No, I didn’t know Mollie was sick, an’ it ain’t so, about them having nothing to live on. They’ve got plenty.”

“And how do they get it if I might ask?” continued Jack mercilessly. “I can see how your money’s been goin’ the last two months. Mebbe you think ’tain’t none o’ my business an’ I know I ain’t much better myself, but it does seem to me if I had a wife I wouldn’t lay around and let her work herself to death to make a livin’ for my children, an’ that’s what your wife’s been doin’, if reports is anyways near right.”

It proved just the right tonic for Mr. Everett and he went home that night, and went to work as before stated. The news of his wife’s illness and a cold head bath sobered him and the desire for drink left him for the time.

Ada grew more anxious as the days went by and all the physician’s efforts to break the fever or cure the cough failed. She watched by the bedside by day and cried herself to sleep at night. She noted her father’s late sobriety with thankfulness, yet anxiety for him was for the time overshadowed by grief for her mother.

Feeling that she must talk with some one, and fearing to alarm or excite her mother and not daring to broach the subject to her father, she called the boys around her in the kitchen one evening after school and said, scarcely above a whisper, “Boys, do you know how very sick mamma is? I know by the way the doctor looks she’s awful bad off. What would we do if she’d die?”

“Die,” repeated James, in surprise. “You don’t think mamma’ll die?”

“I’m afraid she will,” said Ada, steadying her voice with difficulty. “She coughs so dreadful and can’t eat and was so weak to start on. What will become of us, Jimmie, if **mother dies and father drinks?** I can’t wash yet and you can’t work in the bank, and we’ll have nobody at all to care

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

for us.” Ada was sobbing now and the tears were running down James’ face, while Willie, the next youngest child, looked on in wonder, scarcely comprehending the meaning of Ada’s words.

Little Dan hid his face in Ada’s lap and began to cry for his supper and Ada, stifling her own grief, arose to supply his wants. She was early learning to suffer in silence.

“Don’t cry boys. God will take care of us some way. I wanted you to know how bad mamma is so you will be careful not to make a noise to bother her. The doctor said she must be kept quiet, and allowed to rest and now we’ll have supper, Dannie.”

This little talk served to make the boys more thoughtful and quiet. It also drew them closer to Ada and every time they came from school they would ask almost breathlessly how mamma was, to be answered invariably, “She isn’t any better, I’m afraid,” until one day in the second week of her illness Mrs. Everett called Ada and said:

“Bring the boys and come here. I want to talk to you.”

And they came, slowly to her bedside and gazed in awe and wonder into their mother’s face.

“Children, mother is going away soon. If it were not for you I would be glad, but it grieves me to leave you all alone. But trust in God who has promised to befriend the orphan and by and by we will meet again where there is no pain nor parting. I leave you my Bible Ada: try to live by its teachings and teach the boys to do so. My boys! How I longed to see you grow to manhood.” And her hands lingered lovingly on each bowed head. “But that cannot be now. Try to grow up honorable and honest men; be good boys and help Ada all you can and above all, boys, never taste strong drink. Shun it as you would poison, for so it is. And Ada, pray—pray for father—always.”

Her voice died away in a whisper and Ada coaxed the weeping children to the kitchen lest her mother should be too much exhausted by the interview.

IN THE 'TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Mrs. Everett lingered three days after this and then one night when they thought her resting better than usual she quietly crossed the dark, silent river without pain or struggle—

And stepped upon the golden shore,
Where pain and sorrow are no more;
Where tears are wiped from weary eyes,
Where hushed are sobs and stilled are sighs.

CHAPTER XIII.

Mr. Everett seemed stunned when told his wife was dead. He had studiously avoided her bedside fearful that she should wish to talk with him: beg him to give up drinking or something of the sort, and he had a horror of scenes, besides he did not really believe she would die. It would be too awful. He would feel like a murderer if she did, for he knew Jack had but spoken truly, if rather abruptly, and that his wife had been working herself to death while he had been spending his money foolishly, criminally. And now that she was really dead something kept saying over and over, "You have killed her. You have killed her." Until he felt almost desperate and he sat silent and motionless while ready hands prepared the body for burial and kind voices sought to console his weeping children.

Occasionally Mrs. Brown spoke some word to him but if he heard he heeded not. He heard scarcely a word of the simple funeral service that was conducted by John Reynolds at the house and in silence followed the remains to the burying ground.

John walked back with him alone and did his best to comfort him but he answered scarcely a word. His ears seemed deaf to all things save the accusing voice within.

Mrs. Brown remained at the house, put things to rights and had supper on the table when the stricken family returned, and she remained with them until late, trying in her homely way to cheer and comfort and promised as she left to look in often and see how they got along.

The boys went to bed early and Ada brought her mother's Bible and tried to read but could not see for tears. She was so lonely. Her father sat so silent and gloomy with his head buried in his hands. She longed to comfort him, yet feared

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

to speak to him least he would be angry. At last she arose and silently pressed the little Bible into his hands and fled to her bed. She lay trembling a moment beside little Dan and then quietly wept herself to sleep.

Mr. Everett arose at length and paced slowly back and forth in the firelight. His face looked drawn and haggard. The blinds had not been closed nor the lamp lighted and as Mr. Everett walked back and forth he could plainly see the light from Mr. Bunn's saloon, although it was two squares farther up the street. They were having a good time it seemed. He could hear the sound of the violin as the door opened occasionally either to admit a new arrival or to allow some one to pass out. A thousand demons seemed beckoning him on and his eyes turned more eagerly each time as he passed the window. Why should he not go? What was there left for him except to drink—drink and forget? Until death came? Then what? He would not think further. His hand was upon the doorknob when little Dan moved and called "Mamma! Mamma!"

Mr. Everett's hand fell away from the door and a cold sweat stood on his brow. What was it he was about to do? Leave his motherless children, on this, the first night of their loneliness while he made a worse brute of himself than he was? No! Slave to drink as he was he could not do that. But, Oh, God, how could he rid himself of this dreadful burden that seemed crushing him to the earth! How resist the longing for drink and forgetfulness? He wished now he had talked with Mollie and asked her to forgive him instead of avoiding her as he had done. He believed he would have felt better.

Seating himself again he took up the Bible that had fallen to the floor and began idly turning the leaves without any idea what he wished to read or where to look for anything to help him. It was all about "repentance" and "faith" and things he could not understand and he tossed it aside presently and arose again and began pacing the floor as before, growing more desperate each moment. What was the use of his living any longer? His children would be better

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

cared for without him and even if death ended in eternal punishment it could be no worse than this.

He paused before a chest of drawers and opening one he took therefrom a revolver. He examined it closely. Yes, he believed it would shoot, though it had lain there so long. He had often wished to carry it with him but *she* had begged him so not to do that he had always yielded. Why not end his wretched life? He felt that he could not quit drinking. Had he not tried time and again only to fail? Why struggle against fate longer? "But it is cowardly to take your own life," said his conscience.

"What if it is? Has not my whole life been filled with cowardly acts? This would be but a fitting end to it all."

He had been fingering the weapon restlessly while he thought but presently placed it back in the drawer and turned away. He could not take his own life, miserable and useless as he felt it to be.

Seating himself again in the chair he covered his face with his hands and began to weep and sob as only a strong man can. Tears of bitterest grief and repentance they were.

"Oh, God, what shall I do? How rid myself of this awful burden?" He kept repeating neither realizing that he was praying nor expecting an answer to his prayer.

Ada was awakened by her father's words and grief. She was frightened at first. She had never known him to weep before. She longed to comfort him, yet feared to anger him. Then she heard the words he kept repeating between his sobs and silently crept from the bed and was by his side in an instant.

"Papa, oh papa," was all she could say, and winding her arm about his neck she mingled her tears with his. Both wept in silence for some moments and then Ada thought to comfort him.

"Papa, mamma is at rest tonight and happy and she wouldn't want us to grieve for her. Do you think she would?"

She could not understand what a load of sin was weighing him down but thought his grief was solely for her

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

mother, and though he did not reply she saw his grief was less violent.

"Mamma so wanted you to be a Christian, papa, she told me to pray for you always. Papa, don't you ever pray?"

"No, Ada; I can't pray. God wouldn't hear if I did. I've been too wicked," was the answer.

"But, papa, God will hear and forgive if you are sorry," said Ada.

"God knows I'm sorry, Ada." And again his tears flowed freely but he did not sob so as before but wept silently and it seemed to him that his grief and sin flowed away with his tears.

"There, I feel better now, Ada." And then he added slowly, wonderingly. "If I could believe it possible that God could forgive such a wretch as I, then I would think he had forgiven me. But no; it cannot be. It is only because I have shed tears. I have felt all the time that if I could shed tears I would feel better."

He arose again and paced the floor. But what a change there was in him! His face was still pale but no longer wore the hunted, haggard look but instead was calm and peaceful.

"Yes, Ada; I think it must be true that God has forgiven me. How good and wonderful He is!"

"Oh, if mamma could only have lived to see this!" was Ada's first words. "But she will know, and I'm so happy."

"If she had lived, Ada, I would doubtless have gone on drinking. God knows what is best and what it takes to bring a man to his senses, though my soul hardly seems worth the price."

Ada hardly understood his words and was too happy to care.

"And now you won't drink any more and will save your money and I will keep house and we will all go to church and be so happy. I think mamma must know."

"Yes, Ada, with God's help I will do my best to make up to you children the loss of your mother and perhaps after all my life may be good for something." And he shuddered

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

as he remembered his recent thoughts of suicide. And from that night dated Daniel Everett's Christian life. Tempted he might be even unto falling, but though he should fall he would not be utterly cast down for by his side evermore would walk the blessed Lord, Jesus, his Saviour, Comforter and Friend.

But Daniel Everett was not the only man of Rosedale who went on a Christmas spree with disastrous results.

Joe Allen, a young man barely twenty-one had some way imbibed the spirit of the occasion and went on a "tare" just to see how it would go.

He was destined to have his curiosity satisfied.

He had lived with a half uncle near Rosedale since early childhood and had never taken but one or two drinks in his life, having been kept close the farm.

His uncle held some petty office and was frequently away from home and the management of the farm had been left more and more to Joe.

This was the first Christmas since he had attained his majority and he was resolved to enjoy his freedom to the full, and have a jolly time.

His uncle cared but little for him and had permitted him to grow up beneath his roof as a matter of duty: he being the only child of his dead half-sister.

No attention had been given to his training, except as pertained to work and at twenty-one he had but few ideas of right and wrong and no set principles.

He looked only a boy, with his smooth face and small figure. He went to Bunn's first, to begin his good time, but there being some present whom that worthy wished to impress favorably, he questioned Joe closely about his age. This reflection on his manhood insulted Joe and he thereafter went to McGregor's.

He found many boon companions there and drank and gambled and had what he termed a "flyin' time" until one day when he had been drinking more than usual and had become so absorbed in the games that he could not tear himself away even to go for his dinner.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Espying McGregor's lunch in a basket he resolved to eat it as a joke on McGregor.

That gentleman had also been drinking more than was his wont and as he had also been very busy it was long past noon ere he bethought him of his lunch.

He was furious when he discovered his loss and swore he would kill the sneak thief who had eaten his dinner.

Joe Allen was surprised and alarmed at the storm of rage his thoughtless act had aroused. He acknowledged the theft and offered to pay for the lunch but McGregor's wrath would not be so easily appeased. His revengeful temper was augmented by drink and he thrust Joe from the room with curses and blows. This angered Joe and he in turn swore vengeance and left in search of a weapon.

No one paid much attention to the disturbance and supposed the quarrel at an end. They had no idea Allen meant to carry out his threat of returning for revenge. It would be madness for a boy like him to attack a man of McGregor's size and strength.

But Joe Allen thought only of the blows and curses and his rum beclouded mind greatly exaggerated his grievance as well as his own strength.

No one knew where he went or how he procured the knife but late that evening word was brought McGregor that Allen was only waiting for his customers to leave to come back and settle with him.

McGregor gave a satisfied chuckle as he watched his last customer depart, provided himself with a stout stick or club, closely resembling a baseball bat, secreted himself in the shadow of the building and awaited his victim.

There were several who knew his intentions and Joe Allen's danger but were too much afraid of McGregor in his present mood to attempt to save the foolish boy. McGregor was the acknowledged "bully" of the country 'round and most men who knew him avoided crossing or arousing him.

There were but three men of his acquaintance who would have dared face him that night and thwart his plans. They were John Reynolds, Tom Long and Jack Winters and

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

neither of these men knew anything of the trouble until it was too late to save Joe.

McGregor had not long to wait for the boy and as he saw him coming along in the moonlight he took a firmer grip on his club and held his breath lest Joe in passing should discover the trap. He allowed Joe to pass, almost brushing against him as he did so. Then he emerged from the shadow and said with an oath:

"Here I am, if that's what you're lookin' for," and as the boy turned and faced him he brought the club down with terrific force upon his head.

Joe sank to the ground without a groan and lay there motionless. The street was not entirely deserted and several paused to look at the boy as he lay, and then passed by on the other side without comment or question, fearing either McGregor, who still stood by with his murderous club, or a summons to court.

Tom Long and his clerk were detained at the store that night balancing the accounts and summing up the business of the year and before retiring had taken some letters to the postoffice that were to go on an early train. They had seen the blow struck and Joe fall and walked back by the saloon to learn what the trouble was.

"What's the row," asked Tom of a man who was hurrying away.

Without replying the man paused and several others came up as Tom arrived on the scene.

"What's the fraction anyhow? I saw Mack hit him, but what's it all about?" persisted Tom, addressing the group in general.

Still no reply.

Tom turned to McGregor.

"I say, Mack, what did you do it for? He ain't nothin' but a kid. What had he done to you? That looked like a cowardly lick from where I was."

If any one of the bystanders but Tom Long had spoken those words they would doubtless have been his last, but Tom's sharp, searching eyes disconcerted him. He also had

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

a wholesome recollection of the almost superhuman strength in that one arm, a fact which prompted him to reply somewhat civilly:

"Well, he's bin' quarrelin' 'round here all day. I put him out once an' he threatened to kill me and went away and came back with that knife. So I jist let him have it in the head."

Tom turned his attention to the boy. He first took the knife from his hand and then proceeded to examine the wound.

It was a fearful one. The skin was unbroken but from the temple to the back of the head there was a swollen ridge almost as large as a man's arm.

Tom felt for the pulse. It was beating faintly. Tom arose.

"He's got to be took somewhere and tended to. I believe he'll die any how and if he does Mack, it'll likely go hard with you. You ain't got license to kill your customers with clubs. If you'd only had a little patience now you might a had the pleasure of killin' him like you did Carl Newman an' have been in no danger yourself. At least not in this world. As it is you may not get off so easy."

"I done it in self-defense," said McGregor.

"That'll be decided later," retorted Tom. "Has anybody here got a conveyance handy? He ought to be took home."

A spring-wagon was brought and the boy placed therein as comfortably as possible with a coat for a pillow and Tom's clerk and two other men started to take him home.

Tom, worn out with a long, hard day's work, went back to the store and went to bed.

Arrived at the home of Joe's uncle one of the young men went to the door and knocked and a man came to the door.

"We've brought Joe home, Mr. Green," said he. "He's real bad hurt."

"Been drinkin', I reckon," said Mr. Green.

"I suppose so. He and Mack had some trouble and Mack hit him on the head with a club."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Humph. Well, bring him in. I reckon he'll be alright when he sobers up and 'll maybe have some sense."

A pillow was tossed upon the carpet and when the men came in with their limp burden Mr. Green continued:

"Just pile him down there till morning. He'll likely sleep it off tonight."

"But Mr. Long said he ought to have a doctor," protested one young man. "See here what a place on his head and he hasn't known anything since Mack hit him."

"Didn't know much before either," was the gruff reply. "Or he'd have stayed away from there. No doubt he deserved all he got. Much obliged to you boys for bringin' him home. I'll look after him in the mornin' if he needs doctoring. Good night," and the "boys" saw nothing left for them to do but take the hint and go. Next morning when Mr. Green went to call Joe he found him cold and stiff in death. If he regretted having left him thus he gave no sign. To do him justice he really thought Joe only drunk and was angry with him because he had been drinking more or less all through the holidays.

The death of the boy caused much comment and many and varied were the conjectures and theories concerning it and the punishment that would be meted out to McGregor. But Joe Allen was buried and weeks passed and McGregor was still going about his business unmolested.

There were many who thought it a shame but felt that Mr. Green was the proper one to begin proceedings, but that gentleman had an eye to re-election in the spring and feared to offend the strong element in Rosedale and vicinity that sympathized with McGregor for, wicked man that McGregor was, he had many so-called friends in that rough uncultured community, who listened to his advice and followed his instructions and but few would be officials dared offend him or his "gang."

Finally, however, Mr. Green made the astonishing discovery that public opinion was setting in against McGregor and his gang and the saloons in general and with a keenness and foresight that would have been a credit to his political brethren in the higher walks of life, he saw fit to cater to

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

public opinion. So McGregor was arrested on the charge of murder and brought to trial.

At first McGregor had no fear: not a doubt but what he would be cleared on the plea of self-defense.

When his case was called his witnesses were there, most of them under the influence of liquor, to enable them, no doubt, to see clearer and be fearless in speaking the truth. As the trial progressed McGregor lost his assurance.

It was proved that he had threatened to kill Joe: that he had deliberately laid his plans, provided himself with a weapon, secreted himself and awaited his victim.

The prosecuting attorney denounced with scathing sarcasm the plea of self-defense.

“Granting for a moment that one man has a right to provide another with that which makes him a brute, and then kill him for showing his brutality, it is the very acme of absurdity to pretend that a man like the defendant could not have kept a mere boy like Joe Allen was, from killing him with a knife, without hiding in the dark and striking the unsuspecting boy down as he did.

Earlier in the evening the defendant had threatened to kill this same boy, beaten him and thrust him from his saloon. This fact proves the defendant's superior strength. Why, then, when the boy returned with a knife, did he not take it from him and bind him, if necessary, until his mind was free from rum? Because there was murder in his heart. Nothing else could have prompted the cowardly acts that followed. With consummate, devilish cunning he plans to take the boy's life and for what? Simply because the boy had eaten his lunch.

Gentlemen of the jury, you may call this crime by what name you will, but in the sight of God it is murder.”

McGregor was visibly alarmed. He had no fear that the sentence would be death, but thoughts of perhaps a long term of imprisonment filled him with a nameless dread.

There is nothing a guilty soul so dreads as solitude; nothing it so fears to meet alone, as ghosts of its own crimes, and as McGregor's past arose before him he felt that death it-

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

self would be preferable to long years alone with his guilt, unable to drown thought in drink and when the sentence of fourteen years' of imprisonment was pronounced upon him he turned pale and trembled with fear.

His sentence gave general satisfaction; even Tom Long said it was better than he expected.

Whether McGregor will come out of his long confinement a better man or only a more hardened criminal remains to be seen for punishment never leaves one exactly the same: it must either make better or worse.

CHAPTER XIV.

Tom Long did his utmost to prevent anyone else obtaining license in McGregor's place. He wrote out a protest, signed his own name, and secured enough others to prevent Smith, who was the first applicant, from securing liquor license.

Then a man named Downey bought McGregor's saloon and applied for license but took possession and began selling liquor before his license was granted, retaining Smith as clerk.

Through the agency of Jack Winters he was fined for selling liquor without license.

Downey in turn accused Jack of keeping liquor in his restaurant and selling it on the sly but could not prove that it was true.

Tom Long again started out with his paper, or papers, for Mr. Bunn's license was about to expire and Tom was ambitious to make his town "dry."

When Downey heard of this he walked up and down in front of his saloon and swore if he failed to get license he would sell whiskey by the quart on the street corners and dared any one to try to prevent him.

The fight became general and very bitter.

Messrs. Bunn and Downey, with their respective clerks, became intimate friends and the worthy quartet frequently assembled in one saloon or the other after business hours and talked over their many grievances with the air of martyrs: albeit very revengeful and unresigned martyrs at times.

Behold them then late one night seated at a card table in the back of Bunn's saloon, several bottles of choice liquors on the table and a glass for each man.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

The question under discussion was: How to increase trade and Bunn was saying:

"I just keep the best liquors and sell 'em as cheap as I can and furnish all the fun and music I can, and try to keep down rows. Rows'll give a liquor house a bad name quicker'n anything else. Keep your customers quiet till they get away from your place of business any way."

Downey brought his fist down on the table with an oath that set the glasses jingling in astonishment, whether at the oath or the force of Downey's blow, we are not prepared to say positively, but as these same glasses had served at many a like revel and should have been hardened to oaths, it was more probably the blow that inspired their jingling protest.

"The best way yet to increase trade is to advertise," he said in a loud voice.

"Advertise? How do you advertise?" asked Bunn, with a nervous glance at his jingling glasses.

"Ha, ha, ha; ain't you on to that yet? Well, you are a little young in the business, I believe. That accounts for it. It's this way: don't be afraid to treat once in a while. Give away a few drinks once in a while to men who don't come often, specially *young* men." The peculiar emphasis on the word "young" was accompanied by a sly wink.

"Oh, I see," said Bunn, in smiling approval. "You mean to put up treats now and then for the boys and they will likely make paying customers in time."

"Not so plain or loud, friend Bunn," replied Downey, glancing around nervously. "But that is what I mean. Give 'em a taste now and then, and let 'em learn how good it is, and you'll never want for customers; only of course you've got to be careful an' use a little judgment about who you give it to an' who knows it."

"Humph," grunted Stubbs, "I'd like to see you keep any business secrets here. That Jack Winters 'll find out every thing that goes on; watches around like a paid detective. Sometimes I think he is one and is only waitin' a good chance to have us all jerked."

"Oh, pshaw, Stubbs, Jack ain't no detective," said Bunn.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

“And he’s a good customer, too. Still he is troublesome at times as you have already learned, Mr. Downey.”

“Yes, and I think it’s a shame. Any other business men can do about as they please. Cheat, lie, sell on Sunday or any other day and to any body they please. Fancy a groceryman not being allowed to sell to any one under twenty-one for fear he might learn to eat! And don’t people want to drink as well as eat? All we want is to be let alone to run our own business. It’s jist as lawful as anybody’s an’ as we have to pay fer the right o’ runnin’ our business, I say we ought to be allowed to run it our own way, and I for one aim to run it my way an’ if this Jack Winters don’t mind his own business he’ll come up missin’ some fine day.”

“That’s me,” agreed Stubbs. “I’m achin’ fer a chance to keel him up. I could do it with a good stomach.”

“Always providin’ you don’t get keeled yourself,” laughed Bunn, striving to treat Stubb’s words as a joke.

“I mean it; I tell ye I hate that cuss and some day I mean to stop his spyin’ ’round here. Ever hear, Mr. Downey, o’ the trick he played Mr. Bunn an’ me last fall?”

Downey replied that he had not and Stubbs gave him an exaggerated account of the day Jack so unceremoniously took possession of Bunn’s saloon.

Bunn laughed.

“Now, Stubbs, I think you an’ Jacks about even. You knocked him down before, if you remember, an’ he only made you sing. It didn’t hurt you none, an’ you’d best not kick up any more musses.”

“I can’t git over sich insults as easy as you kin,” growled Stubbs, “an’ I won’t till——” And Stubbs clinched his fist and gave a suggestive blow in the air.

“I’m with you,” said Smith. “He accused me and poor old Mack o’ druggin’ and robbin’ a rich cattle man last fall. He said, too, that we gave Carl Newman whisky when he asked for beer and got him to drinkin’ just before he had the spell that killed him. Seems to me I ought to pay Jack off some time for me and Mack both.”

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"Strange how we liquor dealers do git slandered," mused Bunn, heaving a sigh.

"Yes," agreed Downey. "A man like Winters is really dangerous to us, an' we'd only be actin' in self defense if we managed to get rid of him, an' it looks as if all of us together ought to be a match for 'im."

"You'll have to be smarter'n Mack if you do. He allers carries a gun and he's got eyes all around his head and he won't drink nothin' he don't see fixed hisself," said Smith.

"Well, I'll find some way, see if I don't said Downey. "I'll fix him a drink when he ain't watchin' 'er—— By the Lord what's that?"

Downey sprang from the table and clutched the back of his chair. The other gentlemen followed his example and all stood staring with blanched faces and raising hair at a window near them.

The blind had been violently jerked from its hangings and the window itself was raised a few inches from the bottom, and just outside the window there was plainly visible the most horrible face and form that ever startled human gaze.

Mr. Bunn took refuge on the table while Downey and Smith flew to the further corner of the room. Stubbs stood transfixed, unable to move or speak.

A hollow, unearthly laugh floated in and filled the room. Then the ghost vanished.

Stubbs was the first to recover his equilibrium.

"Jack Winters by all the gods!" he muttered, between his still chattering teeth. "And he's heard all we've said."

Mr. Bunn courageously descended from the table, but sank into a chair as his legs were trembling violently.

"No, Stubbs," he said, "'twasn't Jack. Nothin' human could look and laugh like that. I tell you it's a spirit and a warning to us. I'm goin' to get out o' this business the first chance I get to sell out."

Downey now came forth with a loud laugh and said:

"You're both off. That blind just fell down and we've imagined the rest. I've known of such things before. We'd all been drinkin' considerable and was a mite tipsy. It's

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

my fault for startin' it, but come an' let's have a drink to steady our nerves, then we'll go to bed an' sleep it off. But don't forget, gentlemen, the first one that gets a chance is to do Jack. The rest of us agrees to stand by him and work the self defense racket. And here's to our luck." And Downey drained his glass and prepared to depart.

His words somewhat reassured the others, though Stubbs was inclined to cling to his own theory.

"Oh, you're mistaken, Stubbs," said Smith. "Jack would't have dared come here alone and all us four here."

"The Dickens, he wouldn't," retorted Stubbs. "He could 'ave licked us all with one hand after that scare."

"You're wrong though, Stubbs," said Bunn. "It must be as Mr. Downey says, we just imagined it. It's a warning to us not to drink so much." And the gentlemen separated for the night. All four of them watched Jack narrowly the next few days, but could detect nothing in his manner to indicate that he had any knowledge of their ghost, and even Stubbs decided he must have erred in his surmises.

It was nearly two weeks after that eventful night when two boys from the country went to Downey's, and after drinking, gambling and drinking again, they went over to Jack's to talk and have supper, Jack being an old acquaintance. When they were gone Jack sauntered over to Downey's and called for a drink.

"Good and strong like you just give them boys," he said, with a peculiar emphasis on the "boys."

"They ain't boys, they're men," retorted Downey.

"One's seventeen and tother's nineteen, boys or men," replied Jack, coolly. "I worked for their pa cuttin' timber a few years ago when they was kids and know their ages to a T. They've got a regular old mountain lion for a pa, too, and he'll liven things up for you if he happens to find out you've been treatin' his boys an' learnin' 'em to gamble. It's all very well to treat the boys now and then and let 'em learn how good it is, but you've got to be careful and use a little judgment about who you give it to and who knows it."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

And a half taunting, half defying smile shone in Jack's eyes. It required all Downey's self control to repress a start as he heard his own words repeated, and it flashed over him that Jack had been the ghost after all, and doubtless had heard all their plans, even the one to kill him.

His mind worked with lightning-like rapidity. He must meet cunning with cunning and try to catch Jack off his guard. He would pretend not to understand his meaning and try to convince him that they were all too drunk to know what they were saying. It would require skill and daring, but something must be done to allay Jack's suspicions until——

"It's good advice you're giving me and I'm much obliged. I'm not very well acquainted around here yet and them boys looked like men. I'll be more careful hereafter."

Jack was not deceived by this meek reply, but he chose to appear so.

"Yes, they are giants for their age, and I won't squeal on you this time. Just thought I'd drop in and give you warning in time."

Downey was much pleased by the reply. Perhaps after all Jack had not heard *all* the conversations.

"In turn for your kindness, I'll tell you a good joke on Bunn and Stubbs and Smith and me. We was all at Bunn's a few nights ago havin' a jolly time. We was drunker'n I generally let myself get, for I can't remember a *thing that we done* or a *word that was said* till the window blind fell with a crash and we all jumped like we was shot and stared at that window till we imagined we seen a ghost. Bunn thought 'twas a warnin', and said he was goin' out o' business. But I'd heard of people bein' drunk and imaginin' things before and I told 'em what it was. But the scare sobered us up and spiled our fun."

Jack admired Downey's nerve and skilful lying and resolved to let him play his game through. He was curious to learn how far he would go; whether he would attempt to carry out his plans in his present mood or not. If he did Jack knew he had only to keep a close watch and match Downey's cunning with coolness.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"I've heard of cases like that before," Jack replied, smiling. "Not a very pleasant experience, I reckon."

"You bet not; and now, Mr. Winters, let's have a drink, play a game and bury the hatchet. You've had me fined and tried to keep me from gittin' license and I accused you of selling whisky, but there ain't no excuse for us bein' enemies always. You done me a good turn this mornin' and I'm ready to cry quits."

"All right," replied Jack. "A drink and a game it is. I never could bear a grudge myself."

Downey placed a couple of glasses on the table, and taking a bottle of liquor from the cooler, he seated himself at the table, and Jack took a seat opposite him.

Downey uncorked the bottle and poured the contents into the glasses. He then pushed one toward Jack and placed the other nearer himself.

With apparent carelessness Jack exchanged the glasses and began slowly sipping the one Downey intended for himself.

It had only been a matter of precaution on Jack's part. He had not seen the few drops of colorless fluid that had been placed in one glass before it was put on the table, but Downey's face as he exchanged the glasses told Jack he had done well, though he appeared not to notice his companion's discomfiture.

"This is fine, Downey. Tell you what Bunn'll have to look out for his laurels if this is a sample of what you keep. But you don't drink with me, my friend. Why this sudden coolness? Ain't sick are you? You do look pale, sure," remarked Jack in mock concern.

"I—I ain't feelin' well this evening," replied Downey, whose face looked ghastly, and he glanced helplessly up at Smith, who had been a silent, wondering spectator so far.

Smith took in the situation and thought quickly a moment, then stepped to the door and gave a silent signal to Stubbs, who had seen Jack go in at Downey's, and had been keeping a sharp lookout for results. But Downey's appealing look and Smith's movements had not escaped Jack,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

and while he mentally cursed his stupidity in walking into the trap unarmed, he felt no alarm. He had no doubt he would be able to reach the restaurant and secure his revolver before danger really came, if it did come.

He had finished his glass and now arose from the table and said calmly:

"Much obliged, friend Downey. Sorry you wasn't able to enjoy your own glass; mine was splendid. But I must be going. Come over some night and we'll have a blow-out at my expense."

And he walked toward the door, but Smith blocked the doorway with a revolver in his hand.

"You'll just stay here, Jack Winters," said he. "You know too much to be running loose."

Jack surveyed him in calm disdain before he said:

"Are you and Downey trying to corner all the wisdom in the country? Want to shut it all up here and start a new trust in time, I reckon. Well, you don't get mine to speculate on. I'm opposed to trusts, so just step aside and let me out, wisdom and all."

Smith flourished his revolver and refused to move, and seeing Stubbs hurrying across the street, Jack seized Smith's arm and wrenched the revolver from his hand. He then thrust him aside and started for his own place of business.

Downey now appeared in the doorway, and shouted:

"Head him off there, Stubbs. Don't let him get in there."

Stubbs drew a revolver, and recrossing the street, placed himself between Jack and his restaurant. Jack advanced and leveling the revolver, he had taken from Smith, ordered Stubbs to get out of his way.

Stubbs refused and fired at Jack, who attempted to return the compliment, but found to his dismay his own weapon was empty. Downey and Smith laughed.

"You're a set of damned cowards," said Jack. "The whole pack of you are, but I'll match you yet." And he turned and started to run around a square, hoping by so doing to reach the restaurant by the back door and secure his weapon.

Stubbs fired again as Jack turned and the ball struck

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

Jack's right arm and broke it, but he ran on, followed now by all three men, who fired occasionally as they caught sight of their victim, for Jack was dodging behind trees and fences as he ran in order to protect himself as much as possible.

One shot clashed through a window, barely missing a sleeping babe, and so frightened an old invalid woman, that she died next day. But such occurrences are but mere incidents of our grand liquor trade, and must be accepted as a matter of course.

Jack succeeded in getting around the block and was near his back door when he almost ran against Smith, who with Downey had provided himself with effective weapons, before joining in the chase, and had cut across lots to intercept him thus. Turning into an alley Jack sought to reach the restaurant again by the front door, but Stubbs was now close upon him, and just as he gained the main street, and was only a few steps from his own door, a shot from Stubb's revolver brought him down.

His fall was greeted with shouts of triumph from his pursuers.

"Well, I guess you're done runnin' for a while," said Stubbs.

"I believe he is really done for," said Downey, coolly turning Jack's head with his foot.

"Well, I'm sorry he's died so quick. Damn his soul, I would like to 'a' had him strung up somewhere and 'a' shot at him all day."

So spoke Stubbs in the first flush of victory, when he felt not a little elated at bringing down his man.

A few moments later, however, when a crowd began to gather, and his act was strongly condemned, despite his and Downey's assertion that Jack had been killed in self-defense, his assurance began to ebb.

A physician was called and Jack was pronounced dead, but, guarded by two men, he must lie as he had fallen until the coroner arrived.

The streets had been unusually deserted at the time of the trouble and but one man had seen any part of it. This

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

man was Tom Long's clerk.

Mr. Bunn had kept himself in seclusion until it was learned that Jack was dead. Then he came out with apologies and excuses.

"It was really too bad. Stubbs oughtn't have killed Jack. He could have got out of his way surely. Jack was quarrelsome, but he oughtn't have been killed."

And so on until Stubbs resolved if he had to suffer for his crime he would not suffer alone.

Many were the comments made by the passers-by as Jack lay on the ground, awaiting the examination.

"Jack Winters as I live," said one. "How did it happen?"

"Him and Stubbs had some trouble," was the reply.

"Well Jack was good-hearted, I'll say that for him." And the man passed on.

Tom Long and his clerk now arrived and the clerk bent over Jack a moment.

"Poor, old Jack, so he caught you. I was afraid of it when I saw you pass the store."

"Well, if I hadn't he'd have got me," said Stubbs, from the door of Bunn's saloon.

"Yes, we done it in self-defense," said Downey.

"Self-defense, the devil!" retorted the clerk. "Didn't I see the whole pack of you runnin' him down, and him with this empty gun and a broken arm? If Mr. Long hadn't have been out, I'd have tried to helped him. I would any way if I'd have thought you was trying to kill him."

"Oh, well, he was a regular tough any way," observed Stubbs.

"That's all true enough, Stubbs," said Tom Long. "Jack was rough, but what made him that way? Nothin' but patronizin' such places as you keep, and you needn't try the self-defense racket. It looks to me like you'd have learned a lesson from Mack. And as I told him you ain't got license to kill your customers off with clubs and guns, and you don't need to calcerlate on gettin' off Scott free."

"Well, he's got a revolver in his hand with every load gone," said Downey. "If that don't go to show he done

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

some shootin', I don't know what would. He came over to my place this morning and tried to raise a racket, then he came back this evening and begun again. I tried to pacify him, but he only got worse, and knocked Smith down, and let in to shootin'. Mr. Stubbs heard the racket and started over when Jack made a break for home to get another gun. If he'd have got it, he'd likely have killed us all."

"I don't believe but mighty little o' that," said Tom. "In the first place if Jack had had a loaded revolver he'd have been a match for any six men in the country. He never'd have had to turn and run from two or three. What's more that ain't Jack's gun. He only had an old thing that was no account, till about a week ago, he had me order him one. He said he had a presentiment he'd need one some time. He smiled kind o' queer like as he said it, but I never thought much of it at the time. But that's not the gun I got him. He must have picked it up at your place, Downey, or mebbe had it give to him," Tom added significantly.

"He might 'a' got it over there," replied Downey, who did not relish Tom's plain talk. "I didn't pay much attention to him till the shooting begun. I'd have let him off after he started to run, but Stubbs thought we wouldn't be safe."

Downey and Smith departed to their own place of business and Stubbs turned back in the saloon again, resolving he would not stand alone if the case proved serious.

But this resolve did not quiet his fears for himself or ease his conscience, for wicked man though he was, he still had a conscience. Yet he experienced no sincere repentance; he felt now that if it were to do again he would let Jack off with a broken arm, but it was fear of the punishment and not repentance for the crime that prompted the feeling, and so great was this fear that when Jack was buried and the preliminary trial had convicted him of manslaughter and bound him over to court, that he gave up his place at Bunn's and went to work in a saw mill.

But the reform was only temporary for at his trial two,

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

months later, he was in some mysterious way, cleared of the charge, which only served to embolden him.

He swore vengeance upon the clerk, who had been the main witness against him. The clerk had testified that Jack had been killed while fleeing for his life, pursued by Stubbs, and the latter's acquittal was a surprise to many.

Stubbs returned to his old post but, at his own request, divided time with the stable boy, and a few weeks later while he was driving Tom's clerk to a neighboring town on business, the clerk died in the buggy. Stubbs turned and drove back to Rosedale, and after the coroner's inquest, was arrested, charged with giving the clerk poisoned whisky.

Tom had secured an expert on poisons and was resolved to have the best counsel possible, and leave no stone unturned in his efforts to bring Stubbs to suffer for his crime.

But before the trial took place, Stubbs had gone to give an account of his many crimes to the Supreme Judge of all.

He and a boon companion had quarreled at cards, both being intoxicated. The quarrel led to blows and ended in Stubbs being cut so badly that he died, after a week's suffering, cursing with his last breath.

Bad man, was he not? Yet with different environments he might at least have been a law abiding citizen. While we have saloons, saloon keepers, and strong drink to tempt men's appetites and avarice, we will have such men. We have many even worse than he, made so by strong drink alone. What did you say? Tired of such dreadful tales! Well, but if you and I cannot bear to hear of such crime and misery, what must it be for those who are obliged to suffer from them?

And there are crimes resulting from this pernicious liquor traffic, beside which the few narrated here sink into insignificance. They are hushed up as a rule and kept from the general public, for human ear cannot bear to hear nor human eye bear to see what some weaker, and it may be coarser, humanity must suffer and endure from this same liquor trade.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

And this in free, Christian America, where the voice of the people is the law of the land, or at least should be, and where law and order are supposed to prevail.

But we will not tire you further. A few words in closing and we are done.

Paul Rivers was missed from his usual duties one day, and after a prolonged search was found in a hollow or gulley, near the city limits.

His head showed many a bruise and his throat and neck bore black marks as though from choking.

No expense was spared to bring his murderers to justice and several arrests were made, but no clue could be found that would fasten the crime upon any one, and Paul Rivers' death is still a mystery and will doubtless remain so until that day when the great book is opened and all mystery cleared away.

But Paul Rivers' cloak seemed to have fallen upon William Belmont, also a double portion of his anti-liquor traffic spirit, for a few weeks after Mr. Rivers' death, he took up his work in earnest; and if, as every one believes, Paul Rivers was murdered by the keepers of the low dives of the city, they have gained nothing by their crime, for with youth, strength and almost unlimited wealth at his command, William is proving a formidable enemy of the vicious and lawless element in that city.

He had sought an interview with Mr. Rivers a few days after the talk with his aunt and a few weeks before Mr. Rivers' death. He had found him busy in his office with some half dozen persons in the waiting room.

William seated himself and proceeded to study his fellow seekers after wisdom, spiritual advice or more material things, as the case might be.

Three were young men with strong marks of dissipation stamped in their faces; toughs he has rescued and is trying to help, was William's verdict. Two more were middle-aged men, smelling strongly of bad whisky, and William decided they must be at least first cousins in crime to the former three. The sixth was an old man in rags, who seemed greatly disturbed, lest some one get his place or

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

in some way deprive him of his interview with Mr. Rivers. "I'm third," he informed William, whom he eyed with suspicion. "There wasn't but four when I got here an' two's already gone in. That makes me third now an' I don't want to be crowded out."

"Well, grandad, they ain't no danger o' you bein' crowded out here. The president hisself couldn't git in ahead o' you if he wanted ter. This is one place where money don't count an' every body's ekel." And the speaker cast a triumphant glance in William's direction.

William smiled, and was proceeding to draw from the old man his trouble, when the office door opened and Mr. Rivers appeared.

He looked worn and pale, but greeted William kindly.

"I have seen you at our church occasionally. Your name is Bellmont, I believe."

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, I will probably be able to see you in an hour." And he re-entered his office, followed by one of the rum-scented gentlemen.

"He shook hands with us, too, and spoke to us like that when we first came in," said the youth, with the equality idea, fearing doubtless that William would think his welcome due to his good clothes or more prepossessing appearance. But the latter was too much interested in the old man's story to heed the younger one's remarks.

His story was not so very uncommon, but sorrowful, nevertheless. He had been living with his daughter, whose husband was a drunkard who, two weeks previous, had killed his wife, leaving two helpless and destitute babies, for of course the father was in prison.

"I'm tryin' to get somethin' to do all the time," the old man added, "but they don't seem to be no place fur an' old feller like me, an' I don't see what's ter become o' me an' the little childers. Mr. Rivers' been helpin' us some, but don't know how long he can keep it up as he's got so many to see to. He thought he might run across somethin' I could do an' that's what I'm in sich a hurry about—"

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

there now, it's my time." And the old man ambled hastily into the office.

William resolved to look after the old man and his grandchildren himself or provide Mr. Rivers with the means to do so, and wondered how many more there were in the city like him and how much it would take to care for them all. He also wondered how many people in that city were spending enough for things they did not need—nay, for things that positively injured them—to keep all the helpless of the city. He wondered how many women, who called themselves Christians, were idolizing dogs and cats while little children were cold and hungry; he wondered—but in the meantime the remaining men had passed on and it was his turn for an interview with Paul Rivers, and he could not down a slight feeling of embarrassment as he followed him into the consulting room.

Mr. Rivers motioned him to a chair and seated himself at his desk.

"Well," said Mr. Rivers, as William hesitated, "you wished to speak with me, I believe."

"Yes, but I hardly know how to begin. I thought perhaps there might be something I could do to help along the work you are doing; I am not one of the busy kind, you know, and have time to spare."

"You have helped me at different times," said Mr. Rivers.

"Mere trifles; but I do not refer to financial aid; still, while we are on the subject, I wish to provide you with the means of caring for that old man and his grandchildren," replied William, producing pencil and check book.

"Ah, he told you his story then."

"Yes, while we were waiting. Here is something; you will know better how to use it than I." And William passed a one hundred dollar check to Paul Rivers.

"Thank you."

"Yours, and when you need more you are to tell me. Now, what I have been trying to get at is some way to help our people learn their rights and responsibilities; to teach them the things that are sapping their independence and

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

vitality as individuals as well as a nation. I believe, could something be done to improve the moral atmosphere of our city tenements, many persons, who are now at the mercy of charity, would be independent and self-supporting, but of course you know all this yourself better than I."

"But I am glad you have discovered it for yourself. And you want to do something besides give money?" said Paul Rivers, musingly. "I like that. Money can do much good if used wisely, but an honest enthusiastic man can do more. Why do you not try politics? We are sadly in need of honest officials just now."

William made a gesture of impatience.

"Do not speak to me of politics, please. I have tried them and their bare mention conjures up a vision of rum and cussedness that is positively nauseating."

A smile twinkled in Mr. Rivers' eyes a moment, but his voice was grave as he replied:

"And does not that alone convince you of your country's danger? Do you think it brave or wise to desert her when she most needs the support of her loyal sons—needs them to protect her from the scheming scoundrels, who have only their own interests at heart? Our country needs brave men in time of peace more than in time of war. Men who can neither be bought nor intimidated and who will enforce the law. It is useless to talk of better laws unless we have men at the head of our executive departments who will enforce them. I believe our own city mayor to be in the pay of gambling and liquor houses, for he will not have them punished when they break the laws. I have called his attention to them time after time, but he will take no note of their doings."

"Why, I thought our city government was running smoothly enough," said William, in surprise.

"Too smoothly," replied Mr. Rivers. "As a rule when governments run so smoothly, the devil is having things pretty well his own way. Begin opposing him and you are sure to stir up trouble. We have no trouble with liquor dealers or gamblers, until we begin to oppose them, and try to save their victims or cripple their trade."

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

"But you go on with your opposing just the same," said William, hoping to induce Mr. Rivers to speak of himself.

"Certainly. Christ came not to bring peace into the world, but a sword, and as long as sin and oppression abound, it must remain unsheathed; so long it must be used to uphold the righteous and defend the weak."

"But many Christians do not think their obligations as binding as you do yours," said William.

"Say rather that they do not think at all," replied Mr. Rivers, hastily, then more slowly. "Or, no; perhaps I do not understand why many Christians do not appreciate their duties and privileges more, and we must not judge what we do not understand. Then, too, we are not all called to the same work nor given the same talents. I only know I must do what I do; I would not dare do less."

"But I hear you have been threatened, even with death; they may kill you," said William.

"They killed my Lord; is the servant greater than his Master?"

"But what you do here is hard for a man of your years; you cannot bear it much longer at best."

"Perhaps not; but the fact that the lawless and wicked element of this place does fear me is proof enough that this is my place of duty, even if I had had no call to the work. No, my young brother; I thank you for your interest in my welfare, but this is my place and I would rather meet death today at my post than to face my God twenty years hence, a deserter."

"But do you not find your work very distasteful at times?" persisted William. "I presume you do not find many congenial companions among these people."

"Do you think our Lord found many congenial companions when He came to this earth; that His work was always tasteful? But He bore it uncomplainingly until His work here was done and we are enjoined to do likewise," replied he.

"You are right," said William emphatically. "I see it all now. You are truly one of God's free men. You fear

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

neither man nor devil, because you are doing God's work and He will take care of you. They may take your life, as they have said, but that is a matter of secondary importance to you; you are giving your life for your fellow creatures, just as your Master did before you. What a wonderful work! Blessed is he who has found his work, says Carlyle, and surely you have found yours, and a noble one it is. May mine be half as worthy."

Mr. Rivers smiled at his visitor's enthusiasm, and replied:

"But what does Carlyle say further about work? 'Where thou findest ignorance, stupidity, brute-mindedness—attack it I say; smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest and it lives; but smite, smite in the name of God.' These words might furnish you a clue of your work."

"And I suppose you think I could at least find the brute-mindedness in our modern political machinery," observed William. "But how to go about the smiting, when lawlessness is rampant, and unprincipled officials at a premium is the question."

"You are as pessimistic as Elijah, when he thought himself the only faithful prophet left. You know how he was answered, and have we not a few loyal souls who have not, and will not bend the knee to bribery and fraud? A saving remnant; a divinely inspired minority to think and act for us in times of great danger, and who have always managed to get us off the dangerous rocks before we were quite ground to pieces upon them. It is to this saving few that America is calling today, and she must not call in vain. You and others like you, who can afford the time, must bear the brunt of the battle. It will be a long hard one and you may not live to reap the results of it. You will find ignorance and stupidity as well as brutemindedness and you must not only smite but educate and train as you go. You will meet discouragements; you will be sneered at by those from whom you have a right to expect sympathy, but you must not falter; 'whilst thou livest and it lives,' remember. With a few such dauntless spirits to take the lead I believe the time would not be far distant when Americans

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

will expect their officers to be free men; men who bear neither the badge of rum slavery in their faces, nor the fear of the rum dealer, or any other dealers in their hearts. We may then hope to have our present laws enforced, and anticipate a time when we will have better ones."

"What you say is true," said William, as he arose. "No man has a right to live for himself alone, and I shall try what one man can do, toward bringing about a better condition of things in this city. May I come to you again? You have helped me much."

"Certainly. I shall be glad to help you. Good bye."

So Bellmont had found his work. He had been shocked and angered at his friend's untimely death, and had spared neither time nor money to bring the murderers to justice, but in vain.

He secured the aid of an able minister and for a time contented himself with relieving the poor and distressed, but a few weeks of Paul Rivers' work gave him a glimpse of corrupt government that astonished even him.

At first he thought only the police were to blame, but a closer look convinced him that the mayor himself was instigating and encouraging lawlessness.

Bellmont set his teeth and kept quiet, determined to secure evidence enough to convict the leaders before making his discoveries known, but before he had succeeded in doing this he was made foreman of the Grand Jury, and, like the dawning of a new day, his life work arose before him.

He was aroused still more when the prosecutor gave them only routine work to do; they exchanged emphatic and uncomplimentary opinions and Bellmont proceeded to size up his jury. He found only three men who were willing to attack the city government. The others acknowledged the need of the attack but thought it too strong to be overthrown. They were talked over, however, and began to have faith in their leader. Knowing the detectives of the city to be under the mayor's influence, Bellmont imported two at his own expense and soon had indictments for chiefs of police and detectives. Then the "gang" opened its eyes and mildly inquired the cause of the trouble. It was traced

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

to Bellmont, who as mildly announced his intention of keeping it up. They tried to bribe him; not that they feared him yet; a few trials would show him their power and they would be left in peace, so they thought, and when their bribe was declined with thanks they were not seriously disturbed.

But they had reckoned without Bellmont's Yankee grit; that and Paul Rivers' cloak. Three days later when the mayor himself was indicted the criminals were thoroughly alarmed; in a week more a new daily paper made its appearance, and they were panic stricken. They had hitherto regulated most of the city news themselves, but when it was noised abroad that the new paper was owned by Bellmont they felt instinctively it would not be "regulated."

They then hired sluggers to kill him, but he was warned and one slugger was arrested. The chief of police started on a trip for his health, but was promptly overtaken and brought back. The prosecutor would do nothing, but his assistant agreed to help the jury in its arduous work.

Two of the criminals turned State's evidence and witnessed to a state of systematic crime that for boldness and vileness could hardly be equaled.

People had been lured into saloons and gambling dens and robbed and the proceeds divided with the officials, and children could get liquor at most any saloon in the city.

Some of the criminals escaped but most of them were punished more or less severely; twenty saloon keepers were put out of business; proprietors of other iniquitous dens suffered accordingly, and the end is not yet.

"But we are not building upon another man's foundation," Bellmont remarked to his aunt one evening. "At every turn we see marks of that great man's work. The public was already restless and suspicious and the manner of his death aroused it as nothing else could have done."

"But, William, if the city management was so bad here, it must be corrupt in other places. What is the cause of it all?"

"Oh, yes, we can at least console ourselves with that balm dear to every sinner's heart; we do not stand alone. As to

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

the whys and wherefores of political corruption, I presume every would-be reformer has his own theory; likewise his own cure. My own private opinion is that old-fashioned sin is at the bottom of most of it; love of gain for which man seems willing to enslave his country, grind his fellow men in the dust, and sell his own soul. Of course, only God can remove the sin, but man can do much toward checking its influence and removing elements that augment it. Of these elements, I believe gambling and the liquor traffic to be chief. The former counts its victims by the thousands and whether indulged in in a low city dive, club room or my lady's parlor can conduce only to a lower plane of morality, while the latter, like the great, loathsome leper, it is, corrupts and degrades everything it touches, and not content with its work at home it must needs stretch its rapacious arm across the waters and draw the unsuspecting heathen into its contaminating embrace. I tell you, aunt, I don't blame so-called heathen nations for scoffing at our civilization when it comes hand in hand with a thing like this. To be perfectly honest, I would not blame them if they should hustle our rum and rum merchants aboard our ships and fire them back at us. Though I presume if they should do so while we are in our present philanthropic frame of mind we would retaliate by forcing our liquor upon them at the point of the bayonet. True, we are helping heathen countries in many ways, but all heathendom can not produce anything to surpass our liquor trade in debasing and demoralizing ability, and if Christian America would but pluck this great mote from her own eye then could she not only see more clearly the needs of her weaker sisters but would have a wiser brain and steadier hand to help guide and mold them. But we are speaking of evils as affecting ourselves, and I believe the two just named, together with some of our best business enterprises, manipulated by shrewd but unprincipled men, have done much toward placing us in the grasp of ignorance and vice where we now stand. I believe we will succeed in throwing off their yoke, but it will be a long fight and a hard one, and

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

when it is ended we will doubtless have learned that 'eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.' "

Miss Bellmont goes bravely on, teaching and helping her girls and women, assisted by Isabelle, who, however, is not always wise in her selection of gifts, and only gives when seized by a generous mood, which is not often. A sort of semi-yearly affliction that came with house-cleaning and lasted about as long, but was the dread of the household while it did last. Closets were ransacked, and various articles of wearing apparel scattered here and there, until the whole house looked like a charity bazaar.

Isabelle's charitable moods were particularly irritating to William, and one morning as she was sorting a motley collection of clothing in the middle of the library floor, he paused a moment as he passed through, and asked:

"Why all this disturbance this morning, my dear?"

"Oh, I'm only getting some things ready for aunt's people. I shall not need these things any more, and 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord,' you know."

William surveyed the articles a moment with disfavor, before he replied:

"And so you're going to lend the Lord a discarded ball gown and a pair of dancing slippers. Well, in my humble opinion, were He here to receive them in person He would have about as much use for them as the people for whom they are intended."

"William!" exclaimed Miss Bellmont, who had heard the conversation. Her nephew's words sounded like blasphemy to her.

"Well, but why can't people use more judgment in giving? No offense, my dear. Your gifts are no less appropriate than many others I have seen and I would not discourage you for the world. But let me advise you to keep those things or sell them to the second-hand man, and give aunt's people something they can use."

Isabelle learned slowly, but Miss Bellmont was more than glad to see her interested in any thing, and bore with her patiently.

IN THE TOILS OF SLAVERY.

McGregor, since the story of his crime was recorded, has, by some deplorable quibble of justice, been released from prison, and is plying his old trade in a neighboring town unmolested.

As has no doubt been surmised Bunn and Downey secured license and are doing a highly successful business from a financial and Satanic point of view.

Tom did his best, but the people were tired of the trouble and expense, and refused to make another protest that would only have to be followed in a few months by another.

“You see, Tom, ’tain’t no use,” said John Reynolds. “I know you’re right an’ I’m with you. I reckon you and me’s pulled together too long to split up now, but as long as the majority want the things, I don’t see what we can do.”

“I can’t understand it,” returned Tom, “but I don’t believe the majority o’ the people really wants ’em. Anyhow, I’m goin’ to keep hammerin’ away on ’em whenever I can git a lick in.”

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